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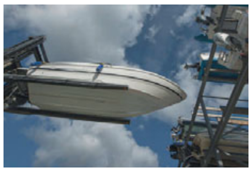

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PBR Contents #getstartedboating

PBR ISSUE 181 MARCH/APRIL 2023

Stingher 650 GT

p40

Tough and capable, this new middleweight craft is a class leader. Greg Copp reports on the latest offering from the Stingher stable, the 650 GT ...

Jeanneau DB/37 p24

An eye-catching Italian design and a Michael Peters hull is always a successful combination.

Prestige M8 p30

HMS provides an overview of Prestige's all-new flagship and reveals the advantages associated with a modern catamaran.

ON TEST

Twisted T450R p54

Fast, efficient and addictive to drive, few big RIBs will match this boat's long legs. Greg Copp reports on the latest from Twisted ...

Technohull Omega 48 p48

In more ways than one, this boat takes the RIB to another level.

ON TEST

Highfield Sport 700 p62

What is this deep-V, offshore-styled, alloy-hulled RIB really like? Barry Thompson reports.

ON TEST

Yamarin 67DC p70

Greg Copp discusses a sure-footed, frugal and fast 23-footer that is Finnish to the core.

BOAT TECH

- **Next-generation Raymarine** p38
- **New LightHouse charts** p38
- **The Latest in Lithium Power** p52

- **Roamer Xtreme** p52
- **Mercury Avator 7.5e** p60
- **Yamaha XTO 450** p68

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Return to Paradise p78

Joe Mourant helps us blow away the last of the winter cobwebs by setting a course for the paradisaic Chausey archipelago.

Nautilus

Underwater Superyacht

This surely has to take first prize in terms of creative thinking, and if the Nautilus actually achieves what its makers predict, then it promises to one of the most extraordinary and attention-grabbing vessels available in the world. **p34**

Ports of call:
Sun, Sea and Savings

Mark Featherstone heads to the Algarve in search of winter sun, staying at the award-winning Vilamoura Marina complex. **p88**

Galaxia Is Back!

Galaxia Boats are back at Marina de Lagos, Portugal, for the Galaxia Boat Show this coming May. **p100**

X Marks the Spot

TMS travels to Florida to gain first-hand insight into the iconic site that is Lake X and its extraordinary history. **p102**

The Great White Debacle

PBR's marine biologist, Giovanna Fasanelli, provides a insight into the global comings and goings of great white sharks. **p108**

Ask the Expert:
Better Out Than In

PBR looks at the matter of 'man overboard' from a different perspective and gains the expert contribution of one of the RNLI's senior trainers. **p116**

Willow's Dream

PBR readers Paul and Karen Williams share their experiences of how they got into boating, and their latest purchase, a new Bayliner VR6. **p122**

Totally Wired

Jonathan Peers, PBR's RIB junky, takes his ageing Tornado RIB, Northwind Challenger, firmly in hand and undertakes a full wiring upgrade. **p128**

Aye Aye, Skipper!

Paul Glatzel considers the vital role played by a good skipper ... **p132**

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> **"Despite BoatLife's undoubted potential and its growing value to the marine trade, British Marine, has preferred to actively promote a caravan show, of all things – an event held at the NEC just one week after BoatLife no less! I have to ask why?"**

Welcome to Issue 181 - Mar/Apr 2023

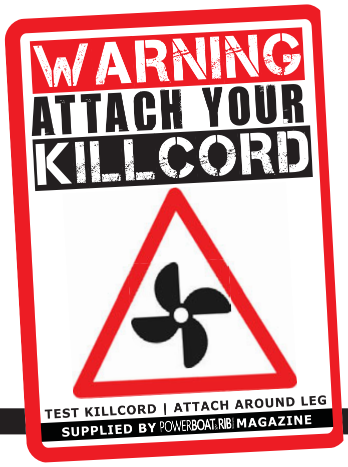
The 2023 international boat show season has already got underway in fine style. Following a hugely successful **'METS'** marine trade fair in Amsterdam this January, next came **'boot Düsseldorf**', the largest marine and water sports show of its type in the world. This event attracted a massive 237,000 visitors! Not surprisingly, boot was hailed a resounding success, although it has to be said that the UK visitor attendance was thought to be down this year.

Next up was the **Miami Boat Show**. Having achieved an attendance in excess of 100K, the show's thousand-strong exhibitor line-up was quick to announce a healthy degree of business being underwritten. The PBR team were present at all these key international events, and if you haven't already had the opportunity to do so, please check out our PBR Instagram channel and other PBR social media platforms in order to catch the many product launches and interviews we captured at these events. As you can imagine, our film and production team have been working incredibly hard, with the result that our coverage of boot Düsseldorf alone clocked over one million views!

Closer to home, **SBS BoatLife 2023**, held at Birmingham NEC in February, drew to a close with a clear majority of exhibitors and public alike calling the four-day show a great success. There is little doubt that BoatLife is a show of much potential, and if it continues to expand and is supported by an ever-increasing number of brands and manufacturers, then the view of many is that BoatLife could become a premier UK event and a worthwhile replacement for the former London boat show. It's certainly held at the right time of year from a buying perspective, and, like Düsseldorf, it benefits too from escaping the variances of weather to which an outdoor show can be prone. But despite BoatLife's undoubted potential and its growing value to the marine trade, British Marine, the federation responsible for the health and welfare of the marine industry here in the UK, has sadly failed to show any support to the show. Instead, it has preferred to actively promote a caravan show, of all things – an event held at the NEC just one week after BoatLife no less! I have to ask why? Perhaps it is largely because, rather than a federation for marine businesses, it is, of course, primarily a boat show organiser itself – one that perhaps sees BoatLife as a threat to its own commercial interests. What do you think? I invite your letters and emails.

If you weren't able to make it to SBS BoatLife 2023 yourself, do check out our social media platforms to see PBR's film coverage of the event. It will give you a great flavour of the show as well as many of the fine craft on display. We also look forward to seeing you at MDL's **South Coast & Green Tech Boat Show**, which has already sold out it's exhibition space. So do pop 21st to 23rd April in your diaries!

But enough said. The season is now upon us, so let's get out there. Good boating, one and all!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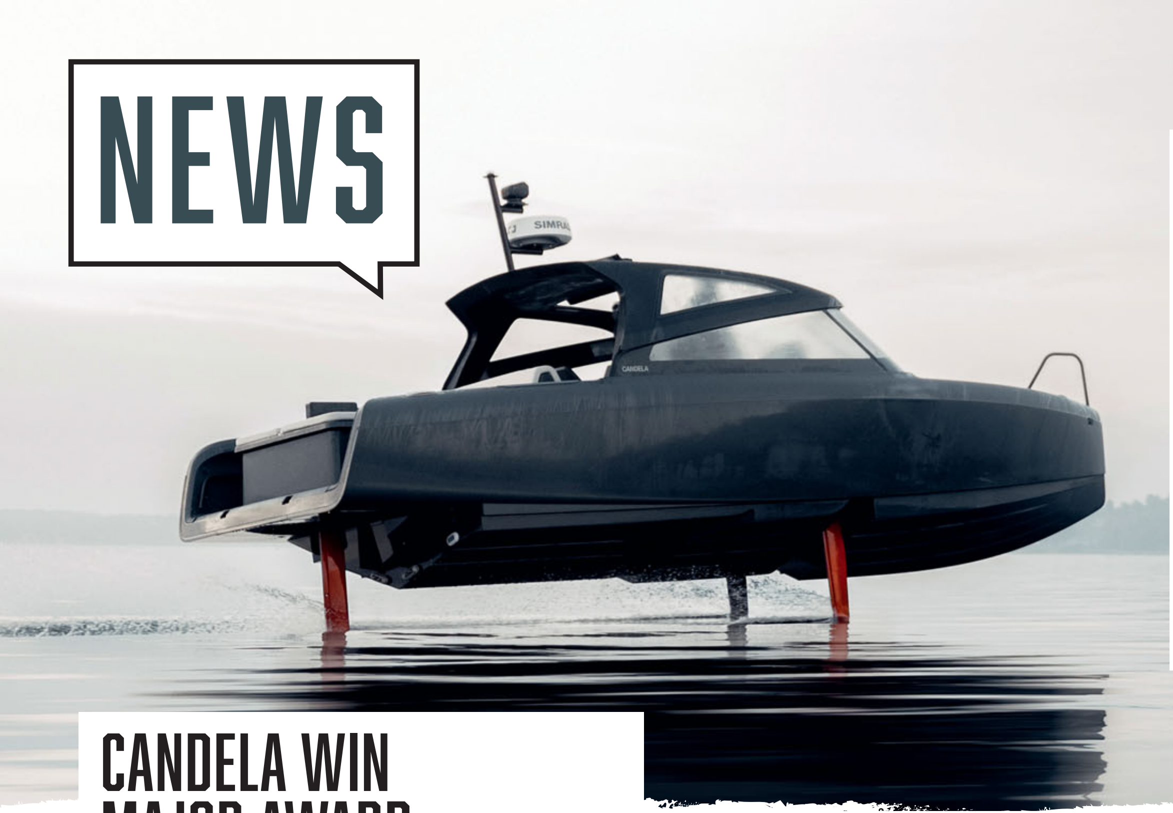

CANDELA WIN MAJOR AWARD

Stockholm-based electric boat manufacturers Candela are celebrating after the Candela C-8 was named European Powerboat of the Year 2023 at the European Powerboat Awards held at boot Düsseldorf.

The Candela C-8 won the electric boat category, thanks to its cutting-edge hydrofoil technology, which allows the boat to fly on water using a fraction of the energy conventional boats need. With a range of 50+ nautical miles at 22 knots, the C-8 has two to three times the range of conventional electric boats and matches the performance of fossil fuel-powered speedboats. Its active hydrofoil system ensures a smooth ride, while its on-board computer automatically adjusts for side winds and waves.

The real game-changer, however, lies in the C-8's energy efficiency, and with 80% lower energy consumption than conventional vessels and an almost non-existent wake, the Candela C-8 causes minimal disturbance to marine life.

Mikael Mahlberg, Candela's Head of Communications, said: 'We're committed to revolutionising the boating industry by creating electric boats that are not only more sustainable and environmentally friendly, but also outperform traditional fossil fuel-powered boats, thus accelerating the transition to sustainable boating.'

www.candela.com

NEW COMPANY STERK MAKE DEBUT AT BOOT

New boating brand STERK unveiled their first vessel, the STERK 31 RC sports boat, at this year's boot Düsseldorf show.

The new boat was exhibited in the MS Marine GmbH booth, where it attracted numerous visitors throughout the show. Representatives of the German and international press, suppliers, dealers and partners of MS Marine GmbH were invited to the unveiling of the STERK 31 RC, which was presented by the STERK team, consisting of Managing Partner Milan Sterk, Yacht Designer Carlos Vidal and Naval Architect Sasha Vlad, who outlined the story behind the project, along with key points concerning the design, materials used, technical details and the unique hull shape.

Present at the booth throughout was the first STERK dealer Lars Kalter of Buy a Boat KalterHundt GmbH with his dedicated team, who were responsible, among other things, for boat viewings, consulting, part of the organisation and the catering. All in all, the show was a success for STERK, with numerous dealer inquiries and orders received from all over Europe and overseas.

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BRABUS REVEAL LATEST IN SHADOW 900 RANGE

BRABUS Marine unveiled their latest design evolution, the BRABUS Shadow 900 Stealth Green Signature Edition, at this year's boot Düsseldorf show.

This high-performance luxury adventure tender combines a distinctive paintjob in BRABUS 'Stealth Green' with matching Signature Style graphics, a wide range of high-grade carbon elements, contrasting matte black detail work, Masterpiece and Sign of Excellence badges as well as the BRABUS 'Sunrise' upholstery colour.

Built for blistering acceleration, the Stealth Green Signature Edition is powered by dual Mercury Marine 450R 4.6L V8 Four Stroke racing engines, producing a combined output of 900hp, meaning the day boat can reach 60+ knots with ease.

In the helm area, everything on the boat's clean and ergonomic dashboard is within reach, with fingertip controls, backlit switches, touch screen technology and the multifunctional steering wheel making this one of the most futuristic consoles.

Furthermore, the dashboard features a full HD Simrad dual touch 'Glass Helm Information Display' for maximum on-screen detail and high levels of built-in functionality.

Full details can be found at www.brabus.com

> **'The Stealth Green Signature Edition is powered by dual Mercury Marine 450R 4.6L V8 Four Stroke racing engines, producing a combined output of 900hp'**

BRABUS
BRABUS MARINE
BRABUS MARINE
MARIAN M800 SPYDER

BRABUS SHADOW 900

SEAWARD LAUNCH NEW COMPANY BRANDING

Boatbuilders Seaward have introduced a new company logo and associated branding.

Chris Clayton, MD of Seaward, stated: 'The Seaward logo is widely recognised as an intrinsic part of our company history. Therefore, when designing a new logo and associated branding, we felt it was very important to maintain our heritage while also reflecting the business moving forward. We are very pleased to have achieved this and feel confident that our new branding will serve us well into the future, and will be instantly recognisable across our Leisure, Custom and Commercial range of boats.'

www.seawardboat.com

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INTRODUCING THE FALCON E8 ELECTRIC TENDER

The all-new E8 electric tender from Falcon Tenders was conceived by ThirtyC Yacht Design, continuing Falcon's long-standing mission to collaborate with world-renowned designers and international stylists.

The Falcon E8 aims to pair the non-fussy sophistication of clean lines with the unassuming qualities of a modern-day classic. A low stepped aft facilitates easy boarding and provides seating for guests when underway. Reclaimed teak decking runs from the axe bow to the stern, with large interior storage located under the cockpit seating. A customisable console is paired with a fully bespoke exterior paint scheme and a signature interiors package.

Rob Armstrong, Creative Director at ThirtyC, commented: 'We wanted to create a no-frills stylish tender that doesn't just look good or perform well, but will also complement any mother ship. The Falcon E8 is an elegant boat for guest transfers but is equally suited to running alongside as a superyacht toy and facilitating fun on the water.'

With sustainability a priority, it comes equipped with a Vita Power propulsion system, comprising a high-performance electric powertrain that integrates the latest technology with proprietary control software.

falcon-tenders.com

FOUR WINNS ENTER ELECTRIC MARKET

With Four Winns continuing to be committed to providing a comfortable and instinctive experience on the water, the company has now announced a move into electric boating with a new 100% electric, 22ft bowrider – the H2e.

The Four Winns H2e is the first all-electric series production bowrider on the market and is focused on ensuring ease of use, lower running costs and quiet operation even at full speed, with a view to providing a fully sustainable cruising experience.

With a shared passion for innovation and technology and a strong belief in the future of electric motors, Four Winns naturally partnered with Vision Marine Technologies to develop the new H2e.

Alexandre Mongeon, CEO of Vision Marine Technologies, said: 'Boaters are more aware than ever of their environmental footprints and are looking for sustainable solutions to reducing carbon emissions while still being able to enjoy the passions they love so much, and we are excited about sharing our vision and passion with the world.'

www.fourwinns.com / www.visionmarinetechnologies.com

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YAMAHA PARTNER WITH VETUS TO ENHANCE BOAT HANDLING

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Augmenting their Helm Master EX boat control system, Yamaha Marine have partnered with boat systems specialist VETUS to incorporate a bow thruster to offer customers fully integrated, joystick-controlled boat handling.

Designed for twin-engine boats, the bow thruster is connected to the joystick steering system by Helm Master EX to ensure that its power level matches that of the engines, creating an on-water experience equivalent to four-wheel drive.

Matt Taylerson, Yamaha's Divisional Manager, Marketing, said: 'We know that docking and close-quarters manoeuvring is often a source of anxiety for many, so the addition of a bow thruster to our proven Helm Master EX boat-handling system was the logical next step. VETUS's years of experience in this arena, and their commitment to product quality and engineering excellence mirroring our own, made them the obvious choice when it came to developing the Helm Master EX and incorporating a bow thruster.'

www.yamaha-motor.eu

/ www.vetus.com

CRUISING CLUB SELLS CLUBHOUSE

The North Wales Cruising Club recently sold its clubhouse, located on Lower High Street in the centre of Conwy, after it became no longer economically viable to run despite the club's water activities going from strength to strength. On the water, a fleet of over 30 boats (sail and motor) takes part in many activities including races, weekend trips and longer summer cruises. The club also provides many opportunities to take advantage of the cruising grounds accessible from Conwy, and a full calendar of events is already in place for 2023.

In addition, the club publishes a yearbook, is an RYA training establishment and has its own launch, an active social media presence and a vibrant social scene.

Looking to the future, the club's management are looking at various options that will provide a more suitable and economic home in the Conwy area.

For further information go to www.nwcc.info

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LONDON LUXURY AFLOAT 2023

London's St Katharine Docks Marina is preparing to host the prestigious London Luxury Afloat boat show for a second year this April.

Following the success of the inaugural 2022 event, organisers British Marine have announced that it will be back, bigger and better, in 2023.

'We have received incredible feedback from visitors and exhibitors indicating there is a clear appetite for this kind of show in London,' commented Lesley Robinson, CEO of British Marine. 'Plans are already underway to build on the success of this year's show. We have arranged for an additional day to the event and hope to add to the extraordinary line-up of yachts that we saw in 2022.'

London Luxury Afloat 2023 will take place from Tuesday 18th to Saturday 22nd April and will showcase the very best of the luxury yacht market, with leading sail, power and superyacht brands taking centre stage and giving boat buyers the opportunity to view a whole range of craft side by side.

www.londonluxuryafloat.com

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IBS Boat Supplies, whose stated vision is 'a clean boat in a clean sea', have announced the upcoming launch of two new cleaning products comprising the company's Eco Green range. The new products are ecologically friendly, formulated with active ingredients that are exclusively of plant origin, renewable and biodegradable.

The new GOMMO ECO ecological inflatable cleaner will be available in a 750ml trigger spray bottle and is suitable for any types of inflatable fabric. Meanwhile, the new SYNTEAK ECO synthetic teak ecological cleaner is a biodegradable detergent formulated for frequent cleaning of synthetic teak decks. The product, which is designed not to harm rubber, plastic materials, gelcoat, aluminium or steel, will be supplied in a 1-litre bottle.

Reflecting on the successful trialling of these products, which will be available online or through IBS stockists, Graham Somers of IBS Boat Supplies said: 'We have carried out tests on both these products and they exceed our expectations.' **For further details, including prices, visit ibsparts.co.uk**

OXE MARINE SIGN OEM AGREEMENT WITH NIMBUS

OXE Marine have signed an agreement with Nimbus Group for the supply of engines.

The agreement means that OXE Marine's diesel-powered outboards are now an available option for Nimbus Group's customers to power their boats. Until now, customers have only been able to choose diesel inboards.

Anders Berg, CEO of OXE Marine, remarked: 'Nimbus Group are one of the Nordics' leading boat manufacturers, and the fact that they have included our engines in their range is an acknowledgement of both our technology and our products.'

OXE Marine's outboards have significantly lower fuel consumption than gasoline-powered outboards of equivalent horsepower, as a result of the diesel powerhead based on automotive technology. Jan-Erik Lindström, CEO of Nimbus Group, said: 'It is crucial that Nimbus Group can offer our customers a broad range of boats and engines. We are pleased with the collaboration with OXE Marine because it means that we are broadening our range and giving customers the opportunity to choose diesel-powered outboard engines.'

www.oxemarine.com / nimbusgroup.se

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CAPOFORTE GO ELECTRIC AT BOOT

Italian boatbuilders Capoforte displayed their first electric model, the SQ240i, at the boot Düsseldorf boat show in January. The company's first venture into the electric boating world was exhibited with a Molabo ISCAD V50 inboard motor, while the boat is also available with a Yamaha HARMO electric outboard engine.

After its successful Italian premiere at the Genoa Boat Show 2022, which included winning the Design Innovation Award 2022 in the 'Motor boats up to 10m' category, the Capoforte SQ240i caught the eye once again at boot.

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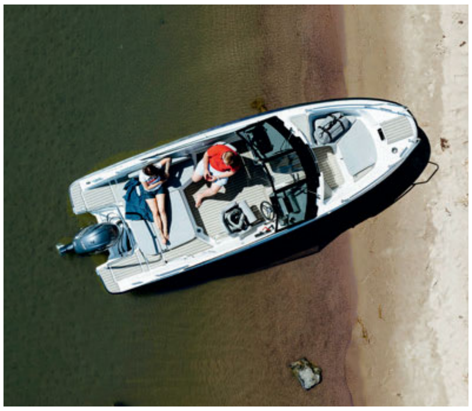
TWO WORLD DEBUTS FOR SUNSEEKER AT BOOT

Sunseeker launched two new vessels making their world debuts at this year's boot Düsseldorf.

The 75 Sport Yacht enjoys performance courtesy of twin MAN V12-1150 or 1900 engines, enabling it to easily reach speeds of up to 40 knots. The lower cabins provide sleeping accommodation for up to eight guests and two crew. Newly shaped exterior flybridge upholstery lowers the overall profile of the Sunseeker 75 Sport Yacht. Its symmetrical stern with its new garage door design delivers rakish styling and functionality. The fully retractable aft cockpit door unites the exterior and interior space, with its bold interior styling and contemporary furniture crafted from wood, carbon fibre and stainless steel, illuminated with dimmable mood lighting.

Sunseeker's new Superhawk 55, meanwhile, is powered by twin Volvo Penta D11-IPS 950 engines and is capable of 38 knots. It features an open-plan arrangement and full-beam cockpit, courtesy of twin pantograph doors adjacent to the helm. The console comes complete with dual display screens, charging pads and chrome multi-purpose dials. There is contemporary lower accommodation for up to six guests with refined interior appointments.

Full details are available at www.sunseeker.com



YAMARIN LAUNCH NEW BOWRIDER MODEL

Finnish boatbuilders Yamarin, who use Yamaha outboards on all their craft, have launched a new 6m model in their bowrider range.

Designed as a recreational cruising boat for couples and families, the new Yamarin 59 BR was unveiled at boot Düsseldorf in January.

Commenting on the launch of this latest model, Yamarin Marketing Manager Johan Finnberg said: 'The new Yamarin fits in the popular size class under 6m and offers plenty of open space for enjoying yourself on the water. The design includes a comfortable seating arrangement that is ideal for socialising, easy access to the water from the wide swimming platforms and a convenient sun deck.'

The wide, sturdy hull makes the 59 BR extremely stable, while the largest engine option of a Yamaha 115hp outboard produces a maximum speed of 37 knots. The boat's fuel economy is also noteworthy, with the most economical speed range of 19 to 24 knots with a 115hp outboard offering a fuel consumption of just 0.7 litres per nautical mile.

Full details can be found at www.yamarin.com

'Designed as a recreational boat for couples and families, the new Yamarin 59 BR was unveiled at boot Düsseldorf in January.'

YAMAHA-OWNED BRANDS ENTER VIRTUAL WORLD

The entire range of models from the Yamaha-owned Buster, Yamarin and Cross boat brands can now be explored in a new virtual environment.

Finnish manufacturer Inha Works Ltd have launched a digital boat showroom displaying more than 40 models from the three brands that can be visited anytime, anywhere using a computer, a mobile device or even a virtual headset.

Artturi Niittynen, Director of Sales and Marketing at Inha Works, said: 'We want to offer potential boat buyers the chance to get to know all our boats at their leisure in advance, regardless of time or place. We believe that users will find this service both useful and fun.'

The virtual environments aim to enable customers to familiarise themselves with the model and its features, including the appropriate Yamaha outboard for the model, and experience what it is like to be on board. Dealers can also use the 3D views to present the boat models in their showrooms.

www.yamaha-motor.eu

YAMARIN
YAMARIN
YAMAHA

INTRODUCING THE CANELLI 30

For anyone looking for something more than just an open walk-around day boat, Canelli Yachts have introduced the Canelli 30, a one-level open walk-around sports boat with an unexpectedly spacious cabin and offering standing headroom in the bathroom (2m) and the possibility of sleeping up to four people down below.

The Open version features an extremely large entertainment deck. The twin-stepped hull, with its low planing threshold, is agile, responsive and offers notably good grip in turns, with a speed range of 53–55 knots.

In terms of layout, the bow offers a large U-shaped saloon that can be converted into a sunbed, and a central steering position for three people, while the aft deck features a galley with an 85L fridge, and three choices of standard aft deck arrangement.

www.canelliyachts.eu

NEW BOAT BRAND DESIGNED FOR ELECTRIFICATION AND FIRST-TIME BOATERS

At the Consumer Electronics Show (CES) in Las Vegas this January, Brunswick Corporation launched Veer, an all-new boat brand designed to support electric propulsion and appeal to the next generation of boaters, and also debuted the first model in the Veer line-up; the X13.

"Recreational boating and fishing are enjoying increasing popularity with younger and more diverse consumers," said Matt Atilano, Veer Director of Strategy. "We identified a gap in the marketplace and a need to create a more targeted and modern experience for these new boaters, which inspired the design and development of the Veer brand."

As part of the brand launch, Veer is introducing the X13, a 13-foot, multi-tool vessel built from durable rotomolded polyethylene to enable boaters to experience the outdoors with confidence. The X13 is designed to be powered by the Mercury Avator electric propulsion systems and Mercury FourStroke outboards, including the Avator 7.5e electric outboard – the first product in the Avator series which was also unveiled at CES 2023.

Crafted by the team at Lund Boats, the X13 offers great quality and robustness, a contemporary design, combined with thoughtful and ingenious fishing-focused features. The Veer X13 is created with a view to expand access to boating, offering performance, ease-of-use, low maintenance and affordability.

To find out more visit veerboats.com

THUNDERSTREAK SNATCHES UK CHAMPIONSHIP

The late Tommy Sopwith's historic 1963 Bertram 31, Thunderstreak, has won the 2022 UKOPRA National Championship for the Historic Class.

As runners-up last year, a new crew line-up saw Adrian de Ferranti (throttles) and Richard Jessel (navigator) join owner/driver Hugo Peel, racing as 'Team Royal Yacht Squadron'.

Hugo commented: 'We aimed to repeat last year's Class 4 wins. Reliability proved the key, as Thunderstreak has achieved first place in every race she has entered over the past three years. At 60, she's the oldest current raceboat and featured in [MONTH?] PBR.

This year's Cowes–Poole–Cowes saw a boat-breaking, neck-and-neck race with the 90mph Mr Noisy – boasting some 40% more horsepower in its Velocity 28ft hull and being several decades younger.

'Thunderstreak's set-up proved perfect for the rough conditions around Poole Bay and the Solent, and she romped home by over five minutes,' said Hugo. 'Roll on 2023.'

FASTEST LOMAC EVER DISPLAYED AT BOOT DÜSSELDORF

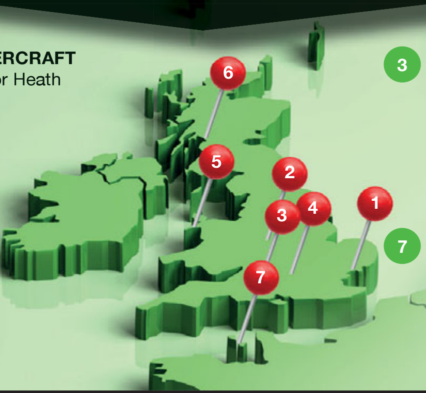
An inflatable boat from Lomac, the Lo Manto family's Milan-based boatyard, which was exhibited at this year's boot Düsseldorf boat show, has recorded a top speed of over 60 knots.

This on-the-water trial demonstrated the synergy between the design and construction qualities of the Gran Turismo 12.0 and the power unleashed by the brand-new 350hp Mercury Verado V10 engines.

Paolo Lo Manto, Sales Manager at the Lombardy yard, commented: 'This landmark result shows not only our boats' constant innovation and evolution for over 60 years, but also the seaworthiness of the hulls and their geometries, designed to exploit the full potential of the latest-generation engines, as in the case of the new Mercury Verado V10s.'

The Gran Turismo 12.0's design and hull lines are by Italian designer Federico Fiorentino, whose long experience in the fields of luxury and racing yachts, together with the experience of Lomac's in-house engineering team in the design of high-performance hulls, has produced an inflatable boat with a dual identity: comfortable when cruising and a racer when planing.

For further information visit www.lomac.it



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DB/37

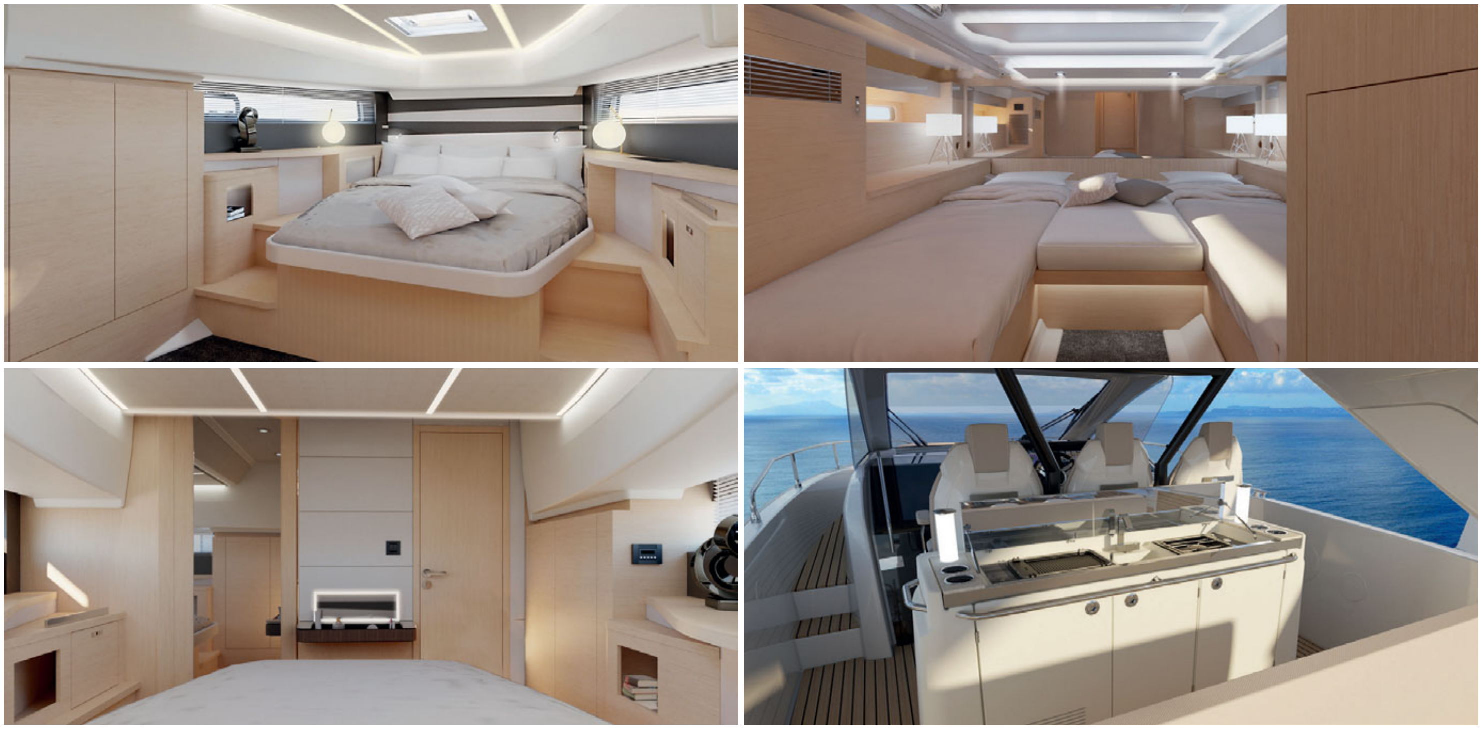
JEANNEAU DB/37

An eye-catching Italian design and a Michael Peters hull is always a successful combination.

Following on the heels of the DB/43 launched last year, the new DB/37 clearly has the same DNA. The hull is designed by Michael Peters, while the external and interior design is the work of Camillo Garroni. Being a smaller clone of the DB/43, we can realistically suppose this boat will be as eye-catching as it is innovative, while providing the driving experience for which Peters' hulls are renowned.

Engine options are twin sterndrives in the form of 320hp Volvo D4s on DPI duo-prop sterndrives or twin 400hp outboards, which will likely be supercharged Mercury Verados. There are trade-offs for both options. The sterndrive option will increase the purchase price but have lower fuelling costs, as well as less internal storage, while the outboard version will have a greater thirst but lower servicing costs, and a big storage compartment where the D4s would have been. Once, it would have been unthinkable to have a boat this size powered by outboards on this side of the Atlantic, but things change, and driving a boat with two silky-smooth supercharged petrol engines on the transom has a distinct appeal.

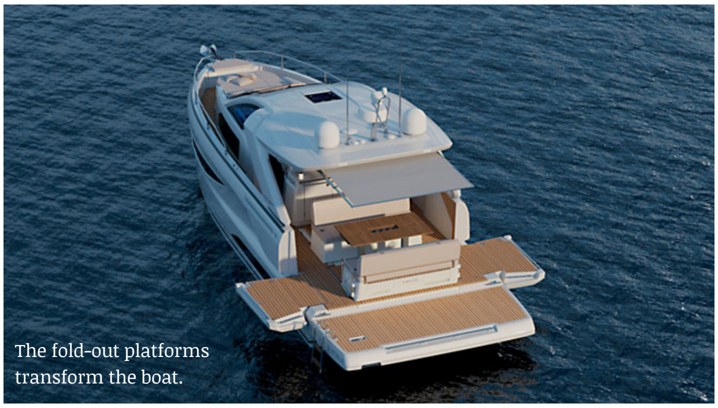
The central helm station features three individual seats, sheltered by an integrated glass windscreen and a large hardtop. The entire area can



1 & 2 The forward cabin is well lit and has full standing headroom. 3. The mid cabin is large but does not have standing headroom. 4. A serious galley for a 37-footer.

be canvas-enclosed to extend the cruising season – and benefit from the full volume of the cockpit. Two recessed side decks enable secure deck movement – accessed directly from the helm. Consequently, the forward deck area is easily accessible for taking advantage of the two sunloungers, and there is a deep anchor locker in the forepeak. The DB/37 appears to have deeper side decks than its bigger sibling, which may slightly reduce the internal volume in the forward cabin, but it certainly increases deck security.

The design ethos of the DB line focuses strongly on its topside innovation, notably the two fold-down bulwarks that sit on each quarter. Activated at the push of a button, these sections expand the aft deck space hugely, and when at rest, they can be safely enclosed by rope-connected drop-in stanchions. In the cockpit, two facing bench seats accommodate eight around a large transverse table. Alternatively, the bench seats and the table convert to a large sunbed by dropping the table, inserting a mattress infill and then folding down the aft bench seat backrest. The deck design benefits from a big, fully equipped, central island galley, whose large Corian countertop is a great social spot and is equipped with a hob, a grill, a sink and a refrigerator. It is impressively large for a boat this size and has enough storage to keep a small family supplied for several days, and with the canvas covers in place, the galley and cockpit area is an extension of the boat's accommodation.



The fold-out platforms transform the boat.

Descending the companionway steps brings you to the 'breakfast point' on the port side of the small saloon. This, in addition to the large topside galley, provides you with the sustenance you want first thing in the morning – and is equipped with storage, a microwave and a refrigerator.

The forward owner's cabin features an island double berth, a dressing table and numerous storage lockers. The aft cabin benefits from the full-beam design. There are two large single berths that, with an infill, convert to a double when needed, though headroom is limited. There is a single day heads compartment, which affords a high level of comfort. Fitted with a sink, a cabinet, a toilet and a separate shower, like the saloon and the forward cabin, it has full standing headroom and plenty of natural light.

The new Jeanneau DB/37 will be available later this year.

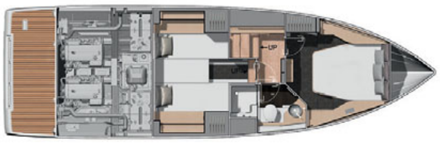
SPECIFICATIONS

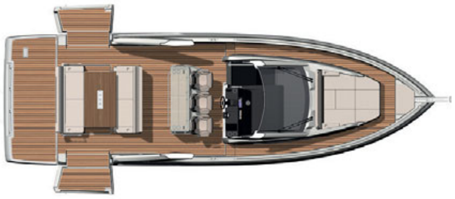
LOA: 11.83m
Beam: 3.57m
Draught: 1.17m
Category: TBC
Engine options: 2 x 320hp diesel Volvo D4s on DPI sterndrives or 400hp twin Mercury outboards
Cabins: 2
Berths: 4
Performance: 35–37 knots (estimated)

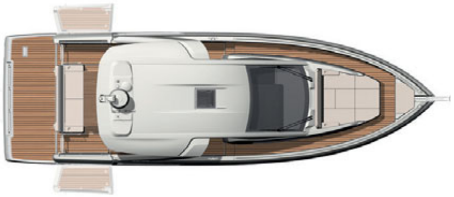
CONTACT

www.jeanneau.fr

LAYOUTS







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PRESTIGE M8

HMS provides an overview of Prestige's all-new flagship and reveals the advantages associated with a modern catamaran of motor yacht design.

A catamaran such as the M8 offers unrivalled deck space and configuration opportunities.

Prestige, a world leader in motor yachts from 40 to 70 ft, have just launched the M8, the flagship of their multihull yacht line, the M-Line. With its multihull configuration, this new model affords space and comfort equivalent to that of an 85ft monohull yacht. In so doing, it takes a step forward in terms of luxury and refinement, with a big emphasis on living space and accommodation.

THE LUXURY OF SPACE CAN ALSO BE FELT IN THE GALLEY, THE SALOON AND THE STATEROOMS

'The M8, flagship of the M-Line, represents the quintessence of our savoir-faire in terms of design, elegance, and fit and finish,' stated its makers. Garroni Design, the studio that crafted the identity of the Prestige range over 30 years ago, were charged with the task of designing the new model and ensuring that the key aesthetic codes of Prestige's heritage were preserved within the configuration of a multihull. The result is the M8, which features a distinctive hull designed for purpose as a unique motor yacht. The design is narrower but still taller than a sailing catamaran and offers an unequalled surface area and dimensions never before seen in existing multihulls in the market.

Designed for open water

With over 270m2 of living space, the M8 features spacious suites, occupying the full beam of the yacht. Two hulls, rather than the standard one, ensure natural stability without the need for stabilisation, and the twin hulls' seaworthiness is aided be a centre of gravity that affords a comfortable ride even in heavy seas. Roll reduction is apparently excellent too, both at anchor and underway. Furthermore, the advantage of a catamaran hull is that it doesn't need to plane to gain stability. Equipped

With over 270m2 of living space, the M8 features spacious suites, occupying the full beam of the yacht.

with twin Volvo D8 600hp engines, the catamaran will be certified Category A and will perform through pretty much any commonly found sea state at speeds of up to 20 knots. While still affording the same volume of living space, the hull's characteristics mean that the M8 consumes half as much fuel as an equivalent monohull. For example, at 8 knots, fuel consumption is limited to just 20L/hr. In addition to her fuel economy, from 8 to 18 knots, the M8's hydrodynamic efficiency also helps reduce the Volvo engines' CO2 emissions.

The M8's on-board systems have also been optimised in order to reduce energy consumption by 50%. This means it can operate at night and for several hours during the day using only battery power. As an option, the Silent Boat Pack integrates a large surface area of solar panels and a substantial lithium battery bank.

On-board features

The side decks, secured by high railings, can be seen as wide walkways directly connected to the central main deck, which is accessed via two side doors. The cockpit represents a generous surface area of 32m2, with direct access to the flybridge. The elements of deck furniture are modular, but the mobile platform, at 4.20m wide, is a key innovation: this true beach club can also serve as a cockpit terrace, extending the two aft transoms, or it can be lowered underwater to facilitate launching a tender. Between the hulls, steps deploy automatically to facilitate access to the water and boarding. A vast storage locker enables the storage of equipment and water toys too.

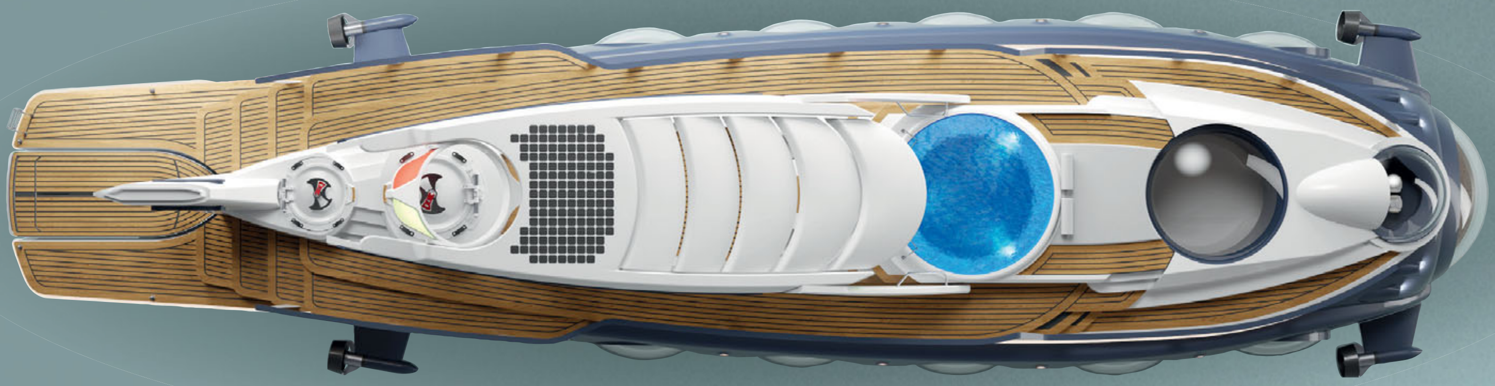
> ... THE M8 IS LIKELY TO BE AN IMMENSE SUCCESS FOR PRESTIGE AND A WORTHY ADDITION TO THEIR FORWARD-THINKING MODEL RANGE

A huge saloon for eight people is complemented by an immense sun deck; furthermore, the two forward bows can be configured as crew cabins if so required. A railing encircles this entire area, including accesses to the forward saloon. The M8's spacious flybridge, with its surface area of 50m2, features an interior and exterior access, a full helm station with seating for two and a table surrounded by eight generous armchairs. The luxury of space can also be felt in the galley, the saloon and the staterooms. For the galley, the M8 offers two configurations: a U-shaped galley that can either be located to the starboard side on the main deck or to aft in the starboard hull. Either way, the modular saloon and dining area totals nearly 50m2 and is flooded with natural light.

With numerous benefits associated with its multihull design, including its generous space, internal profusion of light, private accommodation, exceptional stability and reduced fuel use, the M8 is likely to be a massive success for Prestige and a worthy addition to their forward-thinking model range. PBR

For more information, visit
www.jeanneau.com

The M8's spacious flybridge, with an area of 50m2, features an interior and exterior access, a helm station with seating for two and fabulous social areas.



NAUTILUS

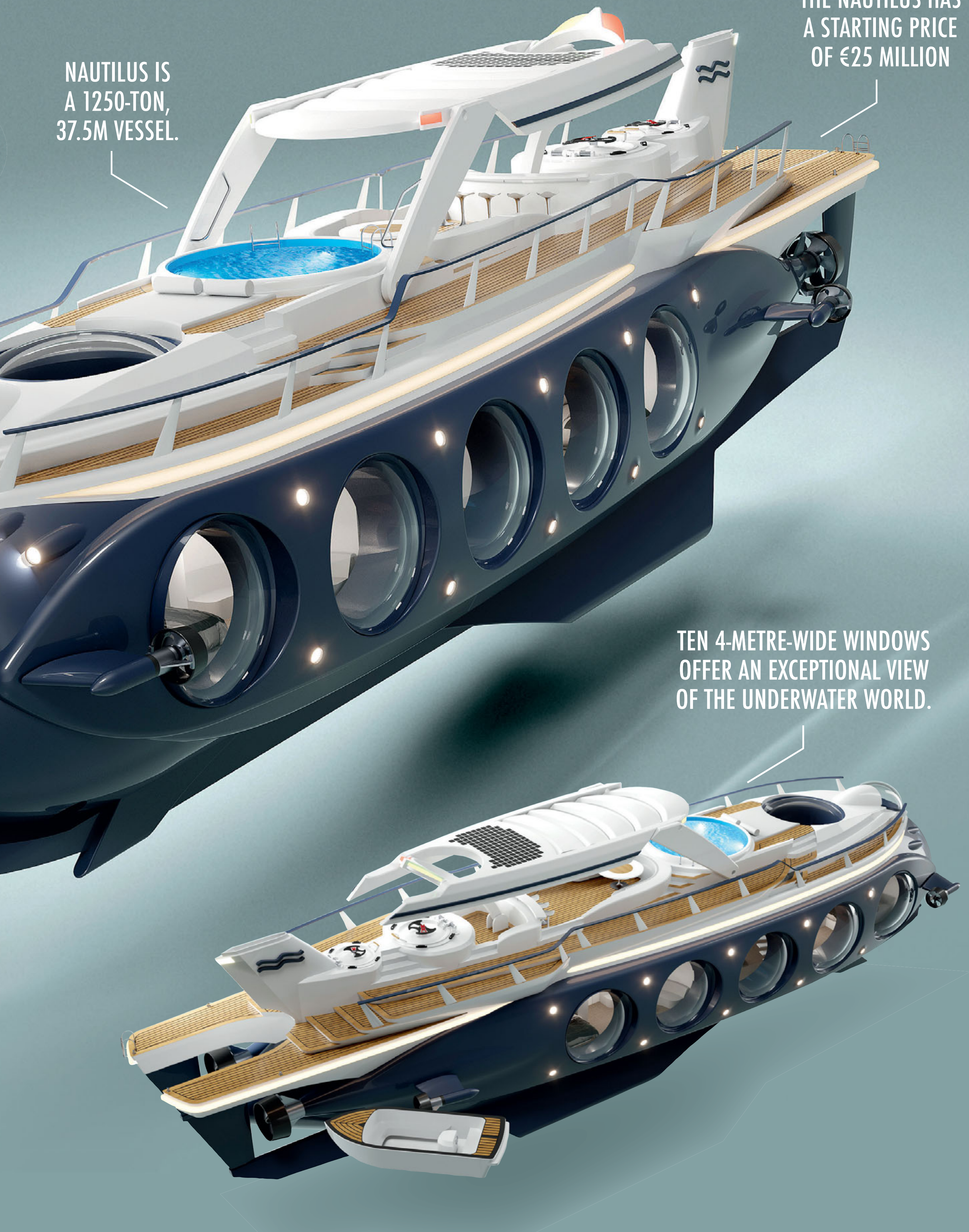
UNDERWATER SUPERYACHT

This surely has to take first prize in terms of creative thinking, and if the Nautilus actually achieves what its makers predict, then it promises to one of the most extraordinary and attention-grabbing vessels available in the world.

U-Boat Worx revealed their designs for a 1250-ton, 37.5m yacht-submarine at the 2022 Monaco Yacht Show. The 'Nautilus', its makers claim, is a vessel that is capable of performing equally as well on the surface as a superyacht as it is of

120 PASSENGERS

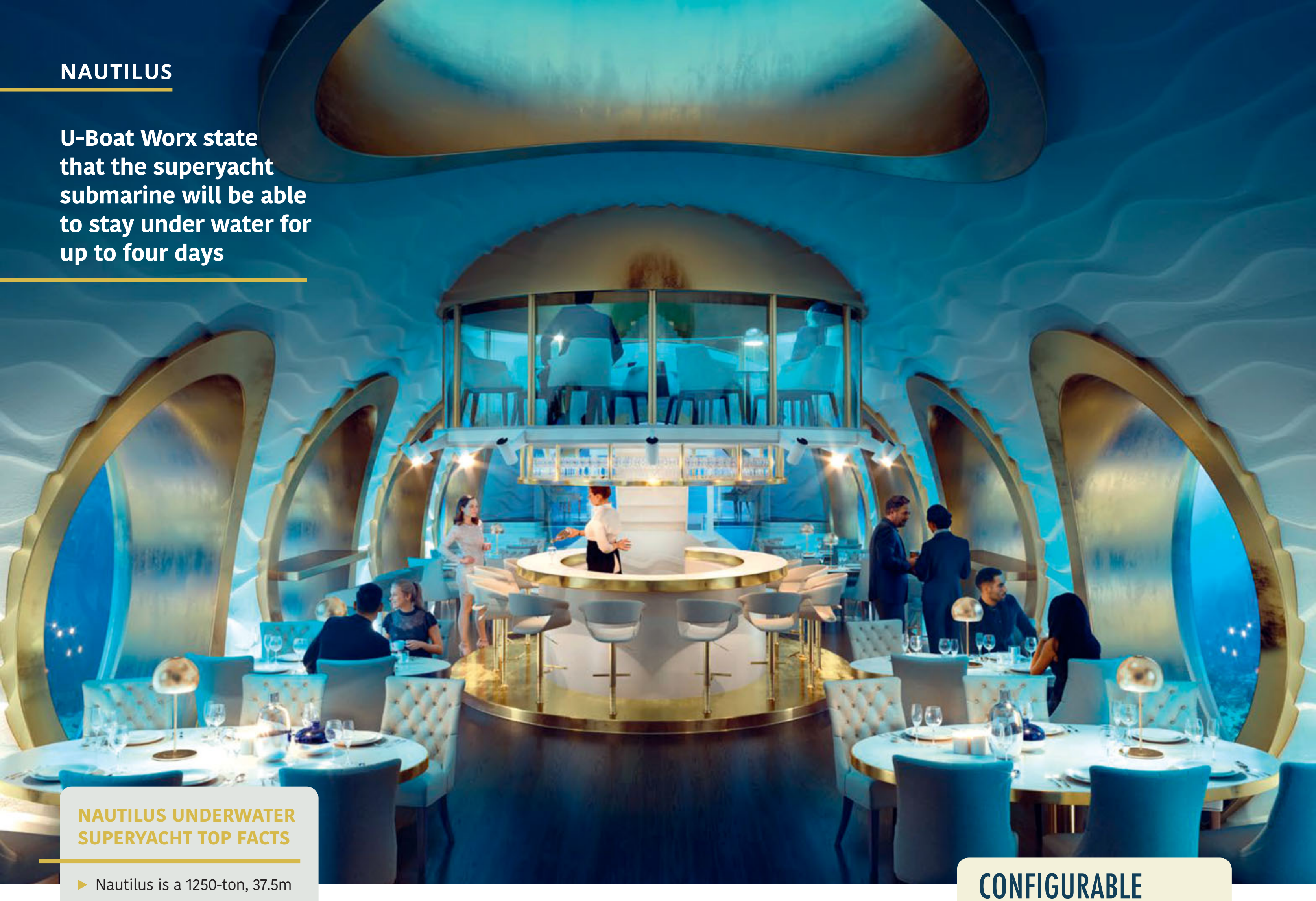
The UWEP (Under Water Entertainment Platform) presents a new class of exceptionally spacious privately-operated entertainment submarines that can carry up to 120 occupants (excluding crew and staff) in a fully conditioned environment to a depth of 200 metres.



NAUTILUS IS
A 1250-TON,
37.5M VESSEL.

THE NAUTILUS HAS
A STARTING PRICE
OF €25 MILLION

TEN 4-METRE-WIDE WINDOWS
OFFER AN EXCEPTIONAL VIEW
OF THE UNDERWATER WORLD.



U-Boat Worx state that the superyacht submarine will be able to stay under water for up to four days

NAUTILUS UNDERWATER SUPERYACHT TOP FACTS

- Nautilus is a 1250-ton, 37.5m vessel.
- It can function as a yacht or as a submersible.
- The diesel-electric Nautilus has a depth rating of 200 metres.
- The cruising speed of the vessel is estimated to be 9 knots.
- On-board facilities include a bar, pool, lounge and dining room, four luxury guest cabins, a spacious master bedroom and a galley.
- Ten 4-metre-wide windows offer an exceptional view of the underwater world.
- The Nautilus has a starting price of €25 million.
- This superyacht submarine will be able to stay underwater for up to four days. At cruising speed, the underwater operating time is six hours.
- Nautilus can be docked at any quay that can accommodate a 6.5m draught.

operating beneath the waves as a full-blown submersible.

Since Jules Verne's book 20,000 Leagues Under the Sea was first published in 1870, people have dreamt of owning a luxury yacht with dive capabilities. Since this time too, inventors have proposed a number of impressive concepts, though sadly, none of these designs have ever come to full realisation. But drawing upon their world-renowned knowledge in the specialist field of submersibles, U-Boat Worx are now claiming to be the first to have engineered a realistic combination of luxury and safety in a fully certified private submersible of superyacht proportions.

CONFIGURABLE FLOORSPACE

The fully configurable 150 m2 floorspace creates not only the ideal space for a restaurant, casino or wedding venue but is perfectly suited for meetings and presentations and as well as corporate hospitality, networking and social events.

Attributes & features

The diesel-electric Nautilus has a depth rating of 200 metres, a surface cruising speed of 9 knots and an underwater speed of 4 knots. When functioning as a boat, she offers a massive sundeck equipped with a freshwater pool, a bar and a luxurious entertaining dining table. This al fresco arrangement can then be retracted before the submersible slips below the waves. Nautilus's interior features a 50 sq. m dinner and lounge area with four circular windows, each with a diameter close to 4 metres. The proposed design for the submarine yacht offers a master bedroom and four staterooms, as well as sleeping quarters for up to six crew. A fully equipped galley makes cooking an underwater meal simple and enjoyable; however, interior layouts are fully customisable by the client.

Tender too

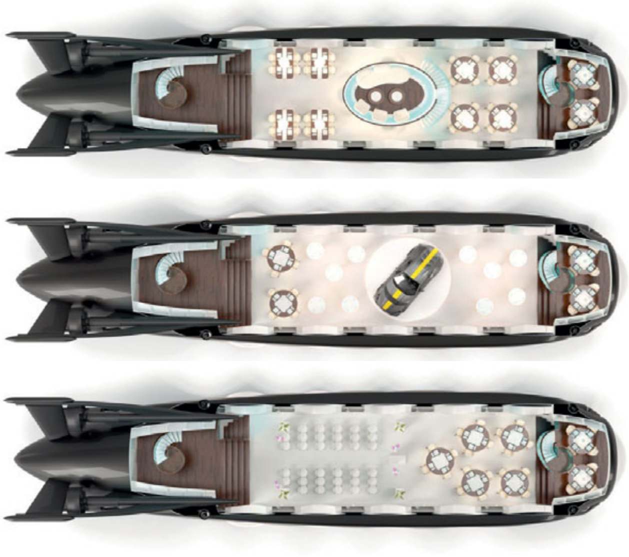
In addition, and as a complement to the 'mother ship', a newly invented, completely pressure-resistant electrical tender is cleverly stowed under the Nautilus's aft deck. The submersible tender, named the 'Aronnax', may also be used for transporting up to five scuba divers underwater to the intended dive spot.

U-Boat Worx state that the superyacht submarine will be able to stay under water for up to four days, but at cruising speed its underwater performance is just six hours. The vessel can also be docked alongside any quay that can accommodate a 6.5m draught.

Place your order

The Nautilus has a starting price of €25 million, and once ordered, the company states that an owner can expect to have the vessel delivered within 30 months. U-Boat Worx Chairman and founder Bert Houtman told PBR: 'People who've decided to buy a yacht will now have to consider if their vessel of choice can also dive down to 200 metres!'

As an added bonus, the Nautilus apparently combats seasickness. 'If the sea becomes too rough,' said Houtman, 'you simply dive and continue your voyage in seasick-free comfort beneath the ocean surface! With the Nautilus, the yachting market will never be the same again.' Here at PBR, we think he might just be right! ■



NEXT-GENERATION RAYMARINE

A suite of multi-tasking electronics providing enhanced situational awareness in all conditions.

Provincetown
33 CFR 165.100: Navigation regulations are published in Chapter 2 of the U.S. Coast Pilot for this geographic area. Refer to regulation section numbers.
1/2nm
Range: 2nm
Raymarine

In keeping with their drive to be at the forefront in terms of ‘next-generation electronics’, Raymarine launched a range of new products at boot Düsseldorf. The range is headed up by the **Axiom 2 Pro**, a powerful line of multifunction chartplotters. This new Axiom is supported by the **RVM1600** (a powerful all-seeing CHIRP sonar module and transducer), the **CAM300** (a compact day/night IP camera) and a new range of **electronic charts** to make fingertip navigation even easier.

AXIOM 2 PRO

▶ **The Axiom 2 Pro is the most powerful Axiom chartplotter developed by Raymarine to date, delivering a fluid and highly intuitive electronic navigation experience.** This new all-in-one display, powered by the latest LightHouse 4 operating system, integrates with Raymarine’s navigation network, including radar, autopilot, LightHouse charts and FLIR thermal night vision technology. The upgraded six-core processor enables faster chart scrolling, instant response and the ability to run multiple apps simultaneously.

▶ The Axiom 2 Pro is developed with Raymarine’s exclusive HydroTough coating, which repels water for reliable touch screen control in all conditions. Users also benefit from customisable keypad controls across all size models, including a choice of autopilot control or programmable soft keys. There is also the Axiom 2 Pro S, with embedded High CHIRP sonar, which is designed for motor boaters and sailors wanting an all-in set-up. For the fisherman, there is the Axiom 2 Pro RVM model, which features the all-new RealVision MAX built-in sonar. **This new sonar technology builds upon Raymarine’s existing sonar technology, allowing users to see deeper and with more clarity.**

CAM300

▶ **The rugged IP66-rated CAM300 mini day/night IP camera is equipped with an HD video sensor and transforms the Axiom into a powerful on-board observation system.** This compact camera can be combined with the AR200 sensor, enabling ClearCruise augmented reality – an impressive user experience that overlays AIS targets, waypoints and chart objects directly onto Axiom’s high-definition video display. Up to four video streams can be viewed simultaneously on a single Axiom display. For close-up night vision, infrared emitters provide excellent visibility up to 10 metres.

RVM1600

▶ **The RVM1600 is a remotely mounted sonar module for those wanting maximum sonar awareness.** It is embedded with RealVision MAX CHIRP sonar technology, delivering greater clarity and improved fish imaging. In terms of multi-channel sonar capabilities, DownVision, SideVision, 3D and conventional CHIRP sonar have all been substantially upgraded. Consequently, they all now benefit from extended range from a powerful all-in-one 600W transducer providing sonar readings right down to 3,000ft.

The remotely mounted RVM1600 module has multi-channel sonar capabilities.

LIGHTHOUSE CHARTS NEW

▶ **Raymarine are also launching a new range of expanded regional LightHouse charts.** Created from official hydrographic chart sources, LightHouse charts offer maximum readability and intuitive navigation. With a premium subscription, skippers have access to an ever-expanding points-of-interest library, enabling them to quickly find local marinas, fuel berths, restaurants, supermarkets and more. The charts benefit from improved draw speed and are available on preloaded microSD cards. The new regions include Western Europe, Northern Europe, the Mediterranean, Australia and New Zealand, while North America charts have been updated.

LIGHTHOUSE CHARTS

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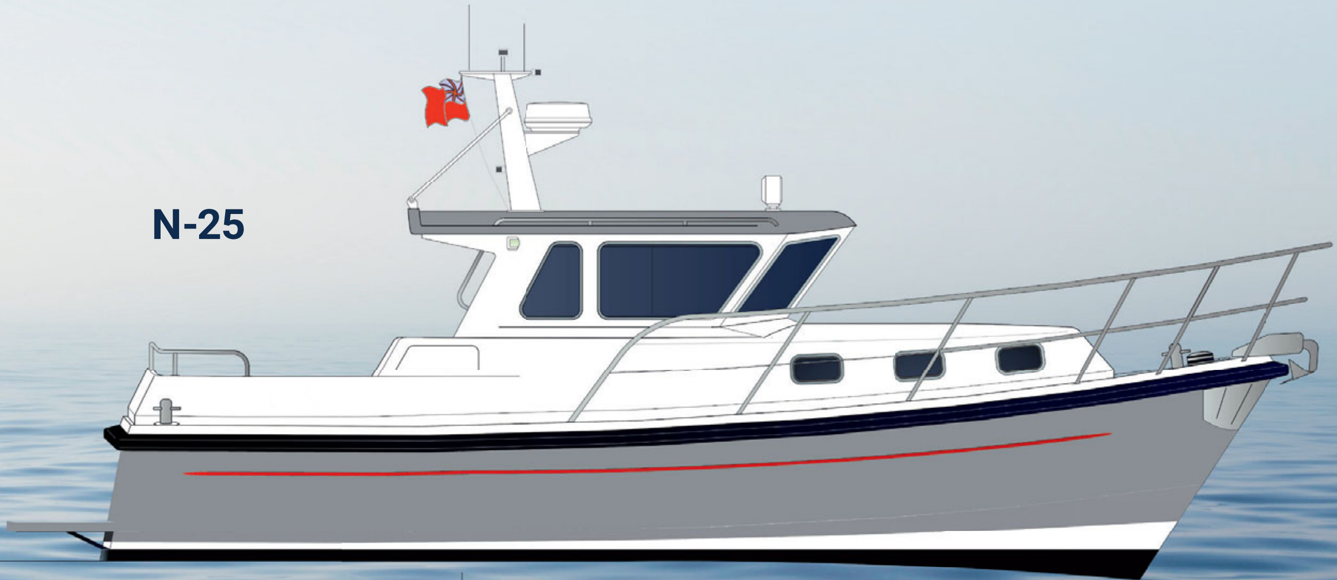

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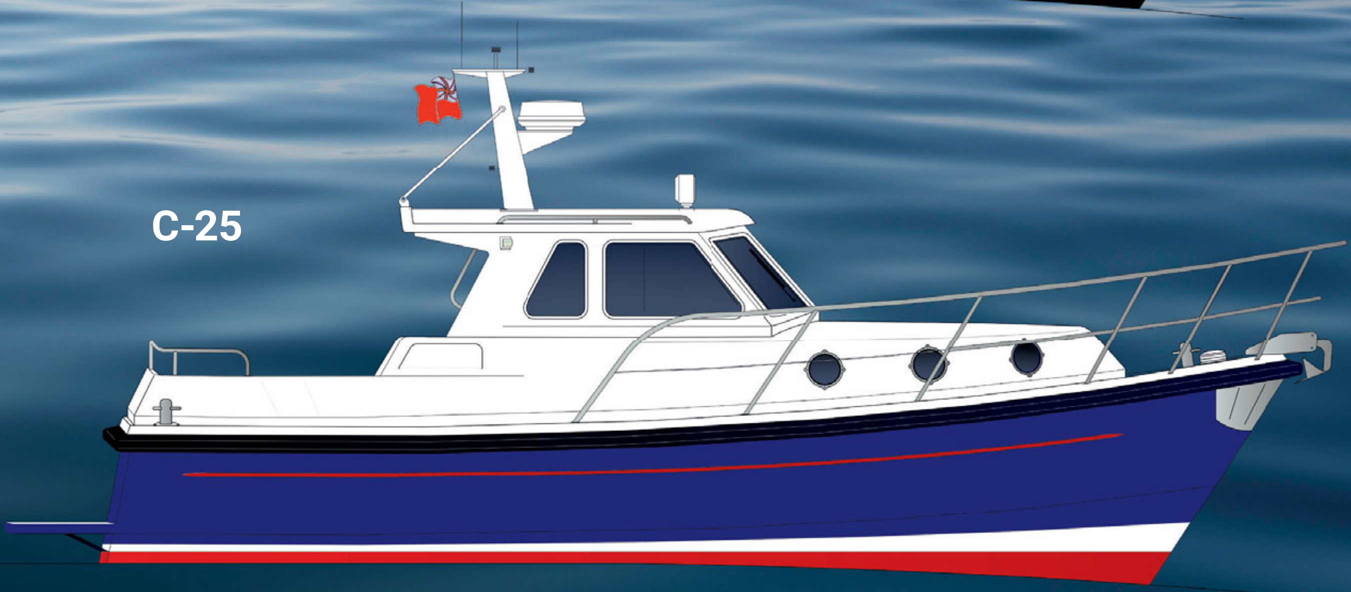

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TEST

STINGHER 650 GT

WORDS & IMAGES: GREG COPP

Tough and capable, this new middleweight craft is a class leader. Greg Copp reports on the latest offering from the Stingher stable, the 650 GT ...

MRL's new Stingher 650 GT is a boat aimed at bringing both new clientele to the brand and new boaters to the water. Better known for its large rigid inflatables, this company has recognised the need to fill a void in the middleweight sector of the RIB market. This addition to the range, like its bigger siblings, features a hull built in Italy, which is then rigged and 'fettled' in the UK by Southampton-based MRL Marine.

Generally, one of the first questions I ask when testing a new RIB is 'how much?'. Over the last decade, rising RIB prices have made a good case for buying a hard boat, especially in the first-time-buyer sector. However, priced at a pinch under 60K on the water with a credible electronics package, the 650 GT is likely to prove popular, and not just with those buying their first boat. MRL have a realistic approach to how their boats are fitted and specified, and the construction of all their models has always been 'sensibly solid'. Just like the bigger Stinghers, the stainless work and the GRP finish are of a high standard.

For a 6.5m RIB, deck space is pretty good, with easy access either side of its double console. Boarding is all the easier via the aft-quarter side decks that wrap around the GRP arch, also enabling water sporters and bathers to access the bathing platforms without clambering over the bench seat. The port-side platform houses a concealed bathing ladder, as well as a small underfoot locker for warps. The 650 GT is clearly a multifunctional sports boat, with a clear focus on sunbathing. It has no less than two double sunbeds: one that you will likely keep laid out in the bow section, covering a cavernous front

STINGHER
STINGHER

EVERY NOW AND AGAIN YOU FIND A SMALL BOAT THAT THRIVES WHEN BEING DRIVEN HARD IN CHOPPY SEAS, AND THIS IS ONE OF THEM.

locker, and a second that is constructed from an infill section that is located between the aft bench seat and the back-facing console seat.

The deck height in relation to the sponsons is slightly lower than you might expect, which you notice once you step into the boat. This enhances the feeling of security, especially for those sitting on the aft bench seat with the raised side decks around it, as well as the fact that the GRP arch is padded on the inside. One aspect I did find slightly out of keeping was the double padded leaning post-type helm seat. As I will shortly allude to, it has its merits, but it could benefit from padded lateral supports, or alternatively the option of conventional seating, if you want to comfortably drive this boat to its full potential. Fortunately, it is complemented by an angled footboard enabling you to press your rear end into the padded leaning post, without which you could feel somewhat ‘footloose’ on a lively day.

LEFT: 1. Side decks on the aft-quarter coamings. **2.** A double sunbed courtesy of an infill section. **3.** A large forward sunbed is unusual in a boat this size.

SPECIFICATIONS

LOA: 6.5m
Beam: 2.7m
Draught: 0.37m
Hull: Non-stepped deep-vee planing
Transom deadrise angle: 24 degrees
Power options: Single 115hp to 175hp Mercury
Fuel capacity: 200L
RCD category: C for 10
Test engine: Single 150hp Mercury

PERFORMANCE

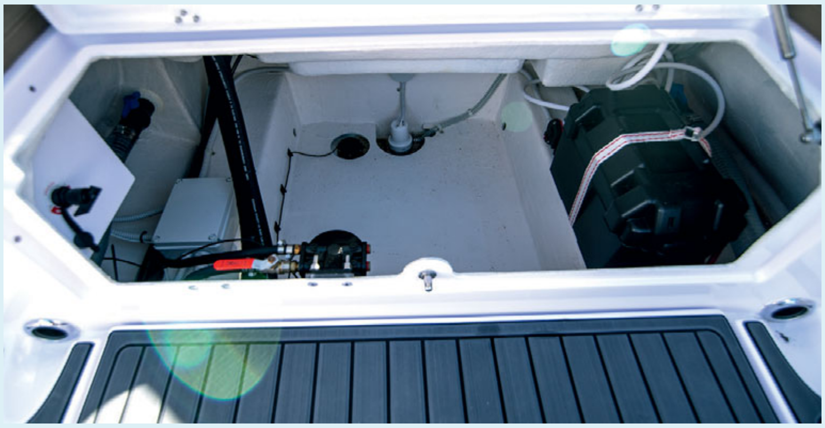
37 knots (2-way average), sea conditions moderate, crew 2, fuel 50%

CONTACT

MRL, Millbank Street, Southampton
Hampshire. SO14 5QN
www.mrl-uk.com

PRICE

As tested: £59,995 (inc. VAT)



ABOVE: 1. All system components are accessed under the stern seating. **2.** A deep forward locker.

The decking is synthetic SeaDek in a carbon grey colour, which is a perfect match for the lighter grey Hypalon sponsons. Storage is generous, notably under the aft bench seat, which opens up to provide access to all the boat's service items, like the battery, bilge pump, electrics, cut-off switch and fuel filter. Deck drainage is dealt with by two scuppers, one on either side of the bench, which run through to the transom. In the forepeak, the anchor locker sits just short of the bow, which is topped off with a GRP SeaDek-covered platform providing an elevated step-off point for disembarking onto docksides or mother ships.

Behind the wheel

Every now and again you find a small boat that thrives when being driven hard in choppy seas, and this is one of them. It may look like the generic family RIB with a twist of luxury on top, but the 24-degree deadrise hull is something else. I have owned several capable offshore RIBs in this size bracket, most recently a 6.5m Ribtec, and before that several Avon Seariders, and without a doubt, the Stingher 650 GT shares the same DNA. Having literally clambered aboard from the Stingher 840 I was expecting a bit of a comedown, but I was very wrong. Driving at wide open throttle into sharpening chop produced a soft and composed ride, leaving me in no doubt as to the strength and sharpness of the hull. Running through some of the confused sea off Calshot, the 650 GT was in its element. It flew off the wave crests and landed with level reassurance that inspired me to keep the power on. It is a driver's boat, pure and simple; in car terms, it would be a middleweight roadster like a manual BMW Z4. It engages you, as the feedback is spot on. The low-down pickup from the 150hp Mercury is very good, though you tend to yearn for a bit more top-end power (you could opt for a 175hp Mercury). In terms of engine trim, it wants not much more than 25% over 30

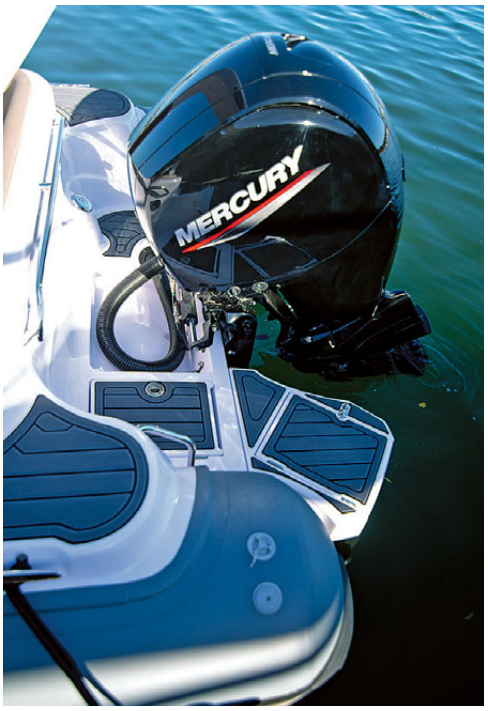
POWERING HARD OUT OF THE TURNS DOES NOT PRODUCE ANY CAVITATION – YOU JUST NEED TO COMPOSE YOURSELF FOR HOW LIVELY THIS BOAT CAN BE WHEN YOU WANT IT.

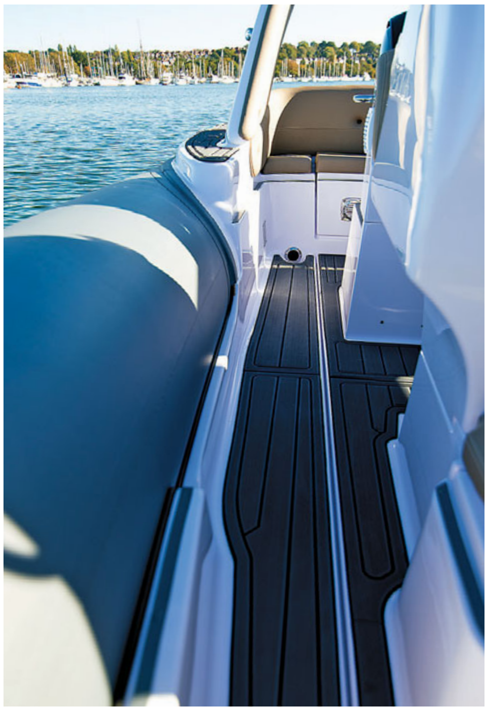
STINGHER
MERCURY

knots, and being naturally well composed, it was happy to plane at as little as 13 knots.

It tracks round tight turns with a dogged grip on the water, and having hydraulic steering without any power assist there is little chance of things unexpectedly getting out of hand. Powering hard out of the turns does not produce any cavitation – you just need to compose yourself for how lively this boat can be when you want it. When turning fast to port, you may feel the need to push your left foot out against the GRP moulding upon which the tubes are mounted, giving yourself stability. When turning hard to starboard, your right leg will have to make do with the angled footrest. This is where lateral support in the form of armrests would be a bonus, as although the elevated standing position provides that perfect view over the

RIGHT: 1. Sensibly sized bathing platforms sit on either side of the engine. **2.** Easy forward-deck movement.





FUEL FIGURES

(Mercury fuel flow meter)

RPM	Speed*	LPH	NMPG
2000	8.0	11.3	3.2
2500	10.6	15.2	3.2
3000	15.0	18.4	3.7
3500	18.3	20.7	4.0
4000	21.2	27.1	3.6
4500	24.4	37.2	3.1
5000	27.9	40.3	3.1
5500	34.0	50.2	3.1
5800 (WOT)	37.0	54.3	3.1

Best cruising speed: 23 knots at 3800rpm returning 4.6nmpg.

***Speed in Knots**

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bow, you could find yourself sliding about the leaning post seat unexpectedly. Alternatively drive slower. The helm design is simple and effective with a centrally located throttle, a carbon-fibre dash, a lockable compartment for valuables and a standard electronics fitment of a Garmin 65cv MFD and Garmin 115i VHF.

> THOUGH IT IS KEENLY PRICED, IT DOES NOT LOOK IT, AND IT DRIVES SUPERBLY.

Verdict

This may be the junior member of the MRL Stingher club, but it lacks nothing in terms of brand build quality. Though it is keenly priced, it does not look it, and it drives superbly. It is at the top of the middleweight category, which has always been popular among beginners and experienced RIB enthusiasts, which no doubt has had a bearing on the design of an effective seagoing hull. In its present 'as tested' form, it represents a great package, but its hull is clearly capable of taking more horsepower, which someone looking to stretch its offshore credentials may consider. In terms of helm seating, a double conventional seating set-up is an option, I understand, as could be jockey seats. PBR

The obligatory forward seat hides more storage.

RIGHT: 1. Secure enclosed aft seating. **2.** This straightforward helm works well. **3.** The design focuses well on all-round deck access.

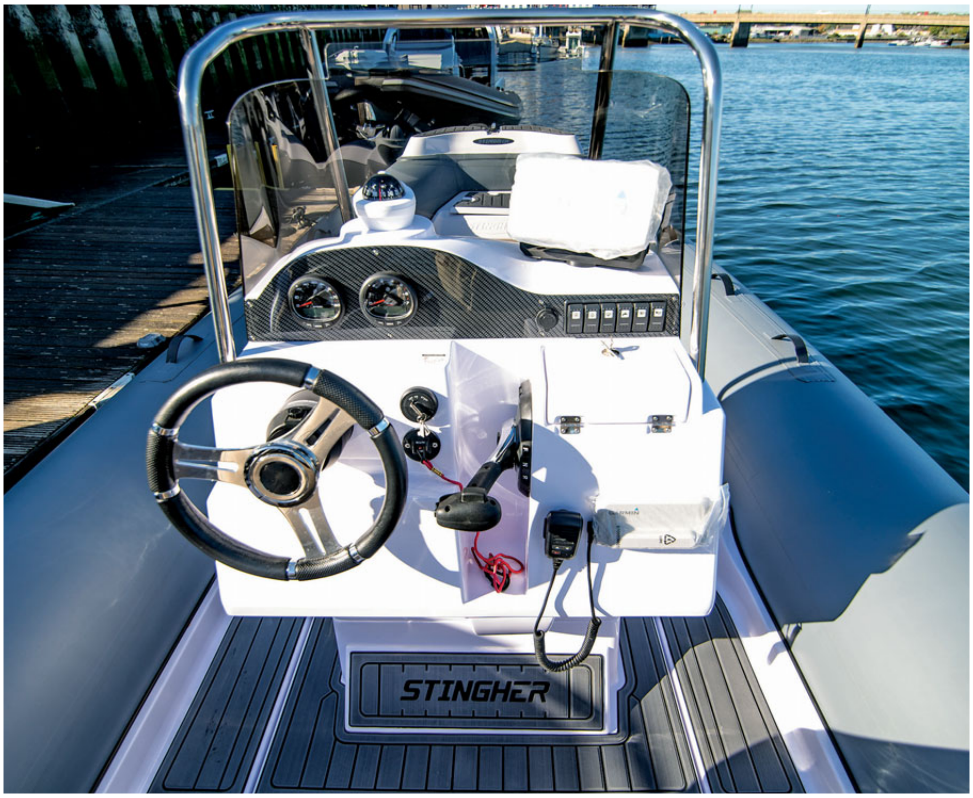
WHAT WE THOUGHT

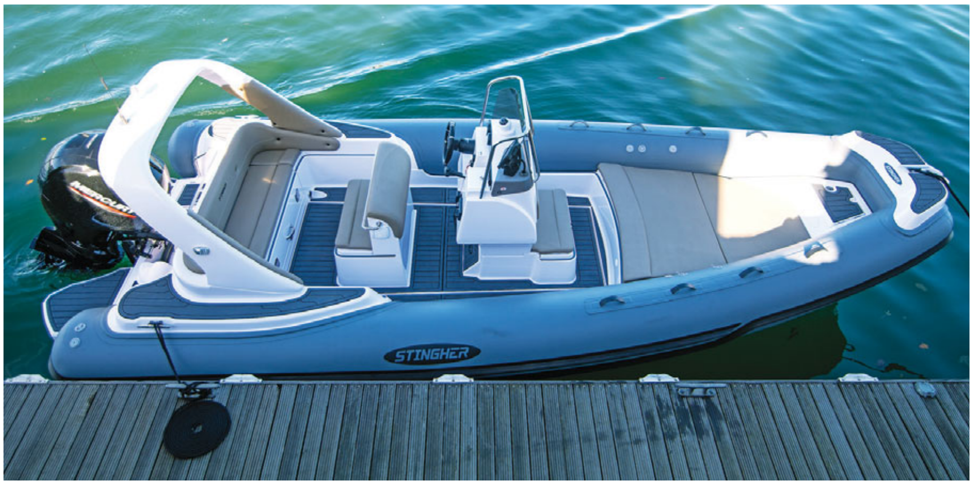
FOR

- Great handling – responsive, steadying steering
- Very soft-riding hull
- Solid build quality
- Attention to detail – even behind the scenes
- Storage and sunbathing space

AGAINST

- Could benefit from conventional helm seating, though this is subjective.





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TECHNOHULL OMEGA 48

In more ways than one, this boat takes the RIB to another level.

The Omega 48, the latest from Technohull, as stunning as it is rapid, is expected to launch later this year. This 48-footer introduces the brand's new design philosophy – offering a contemporary perspective on comfort and luxury, while remaining loyal to its high-performance DNA. Boasting an expansive deck space and a 4.72m beam, this boat is undoubtedly one of the most impressive super-RIBs to date.

WITH THE TWIN POWER OPTION, THE AMOUNT OF BATHING PLATFORM SPACE IS IMPRESSIVE

Its biggest focus, not too surprisingly, is how it drives. Engine options vary from twin 600hp Mercury V12 outboards to five 450hp Mercury V8s, with diesel options available – though you can't help but feel that diesels, even with surface drives, would not really fit this boat's persona. The Omega 48 sports a 'wave-piercing hull design optimised for outstanding performance' even while taking into consideration its wide beam. This is the latest incarnation of

TECNOHULL
600 V12
600 V12
MERCURY

1. The hidden pantographic door. 2. The large double bed has storage beneath. 3. A serious helm with six shock-mitigating seats.

Technohull's proven and patented 'Dynastream hull', known for its excellent rough-weather seakeeping and efficiency. Top-quality gelcoats, multiaxial fibres and carbon-infused components, combined with resin infusion technology, produce an exceedingly durable hull.

The heads is fully equipped.

The boat features a new aerodynamic hardtop design, which, coupled with a full glass windscreen, provides absolute protection from the elements. The helm has a double row of triple shock-absorbing helm seats, all upholstered in premium marine fabrics. A super-wide, fully equipped console with twin 16in Raymarine MFDs, joystick and digital switching provides the helmsman with the tools to enjoy the driving experience to the full.

For the first time on a Technohull, a generous island sunbed sits in the aft deck area. This distinctive feature enables guests to enjoy a comfy stern view of life at speed or keep an eye on wakeboarders and skiers. The bathing platform wraps around the engines, whether they be the 'sensible' double V12 set-up or the all-out quintuple 450hp V8s. With the twin power option, the amount of bathing platform space is impressive, and with twin diesel engines hiding under the sunbed you truly get a large expanse of synthetic teak.

There are alternative deck layout options, including a back-to-back couch with a mini bar (or a fully equipped wet bar), as well as the possibility of complementing the island sunbed with a couch and table. Under the aft sunbed sits a large garage, which, with its dual opening, offers vast storage space for water toys, and even a small dinghy. At the bow, a long spacious sunbed looks back on a wide console seat.

You could easily be fooled into believing this boat has no below-decks accommodation. However, a pantographic door (opens out slightly then slides) sits on the starboard side of the console, which operates in James Bond-like style. This takes you down to a spacious cabin with a large double bed with plenty of storage beneath, and a heads compartment complete with sink and shower.

The Omega 48 certainly adds a new dimension to the concept of owning a RIB; however, the unanswered question for the moment is: how fast does a 2250hp rigid inflatable go? The order book is expected to open in early spring. PBR

SPECIFICATIONS

LOA: 14.95m (15.11m inboard)
Beam: 4.72m
Hull: Deep-V twin steps
Berths: 2
Engine options: 2 x 600hp Mercury outboards; 5 x 450hp Mercury outboards
RCD: B, A

CONTACT

www.technohull.com

The diesel inboard version.

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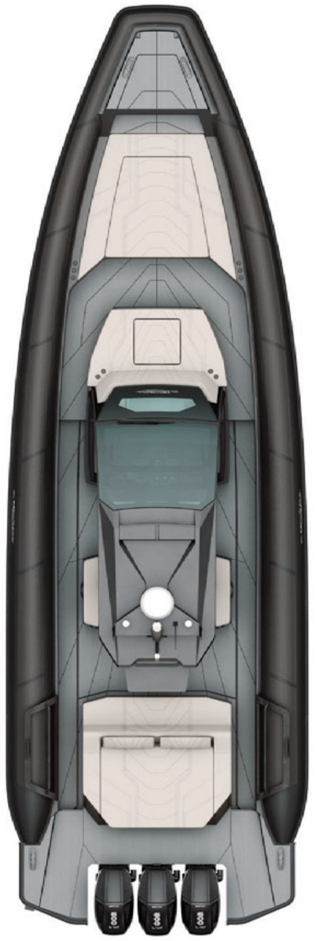

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The Latest in Lithium Power

Advances in lithium battery technology provide greater domestic capacity.

MASTERVOLT
Li-ion

Known for their innovative autonomous power solutions, Mastervolt's new lithium-ion battery range offers impressive power reserves. The MLI Ultra 12/3000, the MLI Ultra 12/6000 and the MLI Ultra 24/6000, boasting lighter weights and smaller footprints than their predecessors, make the concept of autonomous DC domestic power more realistic for lighter vessels.

Lithium-ion batteries are known for their high-energy density, offering fast charging rates and savings in volume and weight compared to traditional lead-acid batteries. These new models are no exception, providing greater energy density, 15% more capacity in amp hours and a greater battery cycle than Mastervolt's previous flagship models.

Available in 12V for the MLI Ultra 3000, and both 12V and 24V for the MLI Ultra 6000, they weigh 20% less than previous models. The MLI Ultra 3000 weighs just 25kg and the MLI Ultra 6000 comes in at 47kg. The MLI Ultra 3000 and MLI Ultra 6000 both have a realistic life span of over 3,500 cycles and can safely use up to 80% of their capacity before needing to be recharged. In many cases, this is up to five times more energy storage than conventional lead-acid batteries, which can only safely use up to 50% of their capacity before needing a charge. The MLI Ultra 3000 and MLI Ultra 6000 can be recharged from 20% of their capacity within 60 minutes. They both feature a unique battery management system, which ensures that the battery is safely and correctly charged. The system is equipped with a self-learning balancing algorithm, which predicts the behaviour of each individual battery cell. Consequently, the battery charge balances proactively, resulting in a faster and more efficient charge cycle. Mastervolt use lithium iron phosphate (LiFePO4), the safest form of lithium battery chemistry.

These batteries have been designed in order to simplify set-up and reduce the specialist skill level required to do this. The MLI Ultra 3000 and MLI Ultra 6000 can be connected in an unlimited parallel configuration, and the built-in common-rail technology offers easy series connection of multiple MLI Ultra batteries. All feature CZone ports as standard, making it easy to fully integrate the batteries into an electrical system through the CZone platform, as well as Mastervolt's MasterBus and NMEA 2000 protocols.

Price from €3,199 for the MLI Ultra 12/3000

The MLI connects to an advanced battery management system.

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Roamer Xtreme

For those that want some extreme battery performance without the size and cost of a Mastervolt MLI, British company Roamer have launched the XTREME range. Designed by a British electrical engineer, this range of lithium LiFePO4 batteries are intended for off-grid use in temperatures ranging from -30°C to +60°C. LiFePO4 batteries are known for their ability to delivery continuous high power, but the XTREME goes further. Its high-power cells allow for a full charge or discharge in just 30 minutes, meaning that even the smallest 100XTREME model, weighing just 11kg, which has a maximum discharge rate of 200A, can deliver up to 2500W of continuous power. That's enough to power a kettle or an induction hob. In terms of capacity, it is claimed to still have enough juice to charge an iPhone 206 times or a laptop 51 times, cook nine pizzas in an air fryer or make 78 espressos from a coffee machine. For those that need more, there is the 200Ah 200XTREME, and a 24V 24-100 XTREME. Cost from £900 for the 100XTREME.

The 100XTREME, fitted with carry strap and weighing 11kg, is realistically portable.

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TEST

WORDS & IMAGES: GREG COPP

TWISTED
T450R

MERCURY
TWISTED
TWISTED

Fast, efficient and addictive to drive, few big RIBs will match this boat's long legs. Greg Copp reports on the latest craft to emerge from the Twisted stable ...

Like the Twisted T300S that we featured in Issue 179, the T450R is a new tune on an old fiddle. However, it is a rhythm that any powerboater with a taste for life past 50 knots will find hard to ignore. The T450R is Twisted's take on the luxury RIB, in this case the Cobra Nautique 8.7. Similarly to the super-bespoke Land Rovers that this company builds, its boats are re-engineered with a great amount of zeal. Using the Cobra as a starting point is solid bedrock, however few boats are perfect, and as any powerboat racer will tell you, time spent 'fettling' pays dividends.

This craft looks typically Cobra with its distinctive raised aft-quarter coamings, deep-set secure rear seating and the luxury bucket helm seats sitting behind the all-protecting console. In the seating and upholstery department, Twisted have followed the theme used in their 4x4 vehicles. The seats are made by Twisted, and though they are original in shape, like the rest of the boat, they are upholstered with a square matrix pattern – in the same style as a Twisted Defender Land Rover. Twisted use a tough fabric-like material similar to Silvertex, and the upholstery is actually twin-skin – as a thermo-bonded waterproof layer lies beneath the top surface. Consequently, you never get that wet-posterior feel from residual moisture lying in the seat foam that has seeped through the stitching. Though it is not easily visible, the seats have inbuilt suspension. This is not of a commercial shock mitigation standard, but it certainly makes life a lot smoother for those at the helm.

The cockpit U-shaped sofa has the same standard of upholstery as the bow seating area and front console seat – and all sit on rot-

THIS BOAT'S BIGGEST ASSETS ARE ITS FUEL EFFICIENCY AND PERFORMANCE, WHICH SERVE TO ENHANCE ITS IMPRESSIVE DRIVING EXPERIENCE.

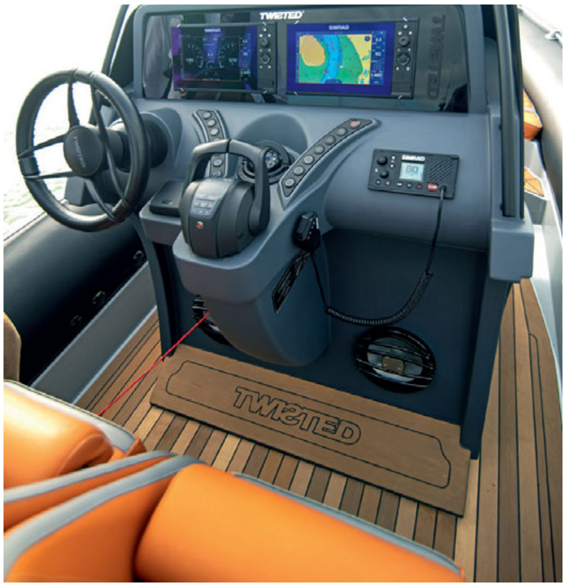
free nylon boards, as opposed to marine ply. Both the sofa and the bow seating convert to sunbeds courtesy of infill sections. A cleverly designed fold-out teak table lives under the central back section of the sofa, removing that arduous task of having to pull out a tabletop from a hidden cavity. The T450R comes fitted standard with a Hertz marine sound system with 10in subwoofer, LED deck lights and LED underwater/bow lights, while a discreetly integrated fridge opens up at deck level in the back of the helm seat console. Above the fridge are two 'glovebox-type' watertight storage compartments, the upper of which is fitted with two USB charging ports. When opened, the compartment hatches serve as horizontal cup holders.

FUEL FIGURES

(Mercury fuel flow meter)

RPM	Speed*	LPH	NMPG
2000	11.0	24.4	2.0
2500	12.6	29.5	2.0
3000	20.4	39.4	2.4
3500	32.2	49.8	2.9
4000	38.6	63.0	2.8
4500	42.0	80.7	2.4
5000	47.3	108.0	2.0
5500	52.0	146.0	1.6
6000 (WOT)	56.0	178.0	1.4

***Speed in Knots**



An impressive all-protecting helm console. 2. Behind this seat lies the heads.

Arguably, the most significant luxury for this 29ft RIB is the heads compartment. Located in the front of the console, it is accessed by lifting up the forward helm seat. Supported by gas struts, this hidden door reveals a generous heads compartment, complete with sink. Sensibly it makes use of every possible inch of headroom by pushing its deck level down below that of the external deck. A transom shower is located in the splash well.

The stainless work throughout is black powder-coated, including the LED light surrounds, cleats and ski pole. As is fast becoming one of the most popular choices for decking, soft synthetic teak runs the length of the boat, which barefoot on a hot day is a blessing. As is to be expected, the colour scheme is distinctively Twisted: the console and helm seating are painted in a super-tough 7024 graphite grey paint, while the hull is an equally robust 7045 grey. In standard form, the Hypalon tubes come in 7045 grey, though they can be ordered in graphite black. Lifting the bow seat cushion in the forepeak reveals an anchor locker fitted with a power windlass and foot controls. The internal GRP finish of this locker, as found elsewhere behind the scenes, is of a high standard.

Behind the wheel

I have always liked Cobra's tall helm consoles, and sensibly Twisted have seen no need to alter the console on the T450R. They have inserted their own custom black dash in which are located two Simrad NSX 9in MFDs. An AIS-equipped Simrad VHF sits on the starboard side of the console, while the throttles are sited centrally to hand, with a large binnacle steering compass just forward of them – in a position

> IT IS EFFECTIVELY BESPOKE OUT OF THE BOX, AND EYE-CATCHINGLY DISTINCTIVE.

RIGHT: 1. The Twisted upholstery is distinctive and hard-wearing. 2. The hidden heads is a major bonus for a RIB. 3. Side deck access is safe and enclosed. 4. The aft sofa provides plenty of dining and sunbathing space.

SPECIFICATIONS

LOA: 8.7m
Beam: 2.53m
Transom deadrise angle: 26 degrees
Displacement: 2.8 tonnes dry with engines
Power options: Twin 225hp Mercury Verado outboards
Fuel capacity: 400L
Water capacity: 50L
RCD category: B for 12
Test engines: 2 x 225hp Mercury V6 Verados

PERFORMANCE

56.1 knots (2-way average), sea conditions F3 to F4, crew 2, fuel 70%
0–40 knots in 7 seconds

CONTACT

Twisted Marine
Brewery Quay, Island Street,
Salcombe TQ8 8DP
www.twistedmarine.com

PRICE

As tested: £155,000 (plus VAT) to include a colour-coded SBS trailer – demo boat special price
For future orders: £189,000 (exc. VAT)

TWISTED
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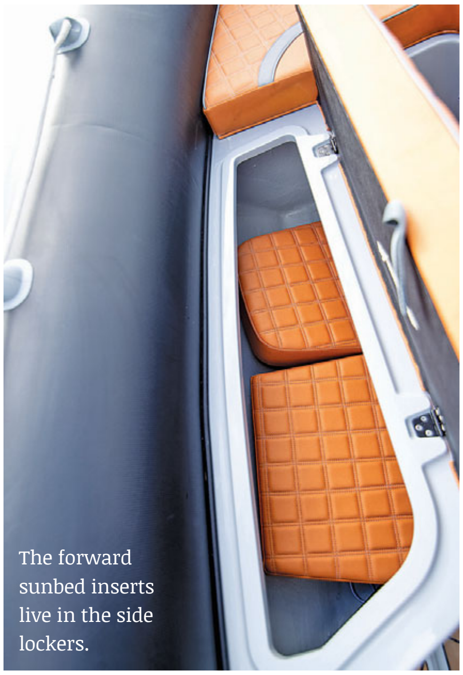
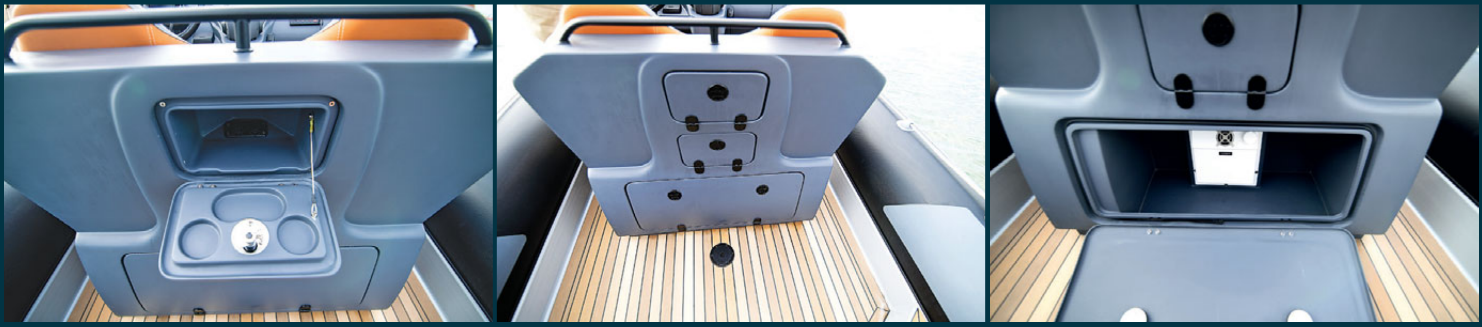

The forward sunbed inserts live in the side lockers.

where it can be accurately read underway. If you intend to clock up some sea miles in a leisurely manner, you will likely feel inclined to sit back and enjoy the comfort of the bucket seat, and the weather protection of the console. If you want to enjoy what this boat does well, you will probably stand with your feet on the angled footboard, while leaning securely into the raised seat bolsters with a good view over the bow.

The bulk of the several hundred hours of R&D that have gone into this boat is in propulsion. This, in simple terms, is based on two aspects: Twisted's custom-built billet engine lifters and their 'performance-tuned' 24in Mercury propellers. The lifters are manual not electric, so you choose what engine height you want and they are set at that level. If, at a later date, your requirements change, the engines can be moved to a different height setting. The propellers have had extensive tuning through many hours of race experience-based R&D. Our test boat had the engines set at middle height, giving a good blend of mid-range power delivery and top speed. Apparently, at the highest height setting, the T450R can reach a claimed top speed of 65

TWISTED HAVE SHOWN WHAT CAN BE ACHIEVED IF YOU ARE PREPARED TO SPEND A GOOD CHUNK OF TIME ON R&D ...


1. The top waterproof compartment houses two USB sockets. 2. All decking is synthetic. 3. A fridge is built into the back of the helm seat.

knots lightly loaded, but at the cost of lower-range power delivery.

Acceleration is impressive, as 40 knots flashes by in 7 seconds, and before you know it, you're running at 50 knots and counting. One thing that was pointed out to me was the efficiency benefits produced by Twisted's tuning. Running at 4000rpm at around 35 knots with a moderate amount of engine trim produced a burn rate of 82Lph. This reduced to 63Lph when the speed was increased to over 38 knots, as a result of trimming the outboards out to 50%. Efficiency claims are often made, but rarely so obviously seen. Further testing showed that this boat has an efficiency sweet spot at 32 knots, returning an impressive 2.9nmpg, but at this speed the boat is barely getting into its stride, so most skippers would likely sit at 38–40 knots if they are looking to clock up some leisurely sea miles. Once you start pushing past 45 knots with her trimmed right, the Twisted produces an impressive rooster tail, and the ride, as is typical of Cobra's wide-beam, deep-vee, non-stepped hull, is reassuringly steady.

In the turns, the boat's level-headed attitude pays dividends. She just hangs on steadily, producing great lean angles supported by the buoyancy of the tubes. Running through the sharpish chop of the day, I started to appreciate what the T450R is about, as the sturdy sharp-entry construction and composed attitude make driving this boat to its full potential a joy.

Verdict

This boat's biggest assets are its fuel efficiency and performance, which serve to enhance its impressive driving experience. Twisted have shown what can be achieved if you are prepared to spend a good chunk of time on R&D – a lesson they have no doubt learnt from their experience in the automotive industry. The T450R has also been crafted and finished for durability, with a good amount of luxury thrown in. It is effectively bespoke out of the box, and eye-catchingly distinctive. However, its most unique aspect is probably the fact that it only has two items on the normal options list: a T-top and a Vanclaes trailer.

The windlass lives under the forepeak cushion.

WHAT WE THOUGHT

FOR

- Fast, responsive, sure-footed steering
- Soft-riding hull
- Great performance
- Comfort
- Good fuel efficiency for a 56-knot boat
- Fantastic finish
- Virtually no extras

AGAINST

- It has a serious price tag, but then it is effectively a bespoke RIB in standard form.

MERCURY AVATOR 7.5E

eco

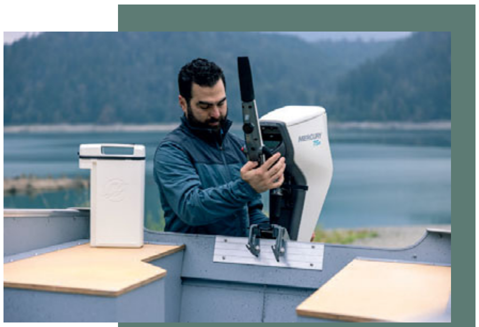
This ‘plug and play’ electric outboard offers unparalleled performance from just 750 watts.

The Avator 7.5e marks Mercury Marine’s debut in the world of electric propulsion and will be the first in a series of electric outboards to be released in 2023. This 750W engine produces the equivalent power of 1hp in fossil fuel terms. However, as electric motors have a flat torque delivery, meaning they can produce maximum torque from zero to full engine speed, power delivery will inevitably be impressive for such a sprightly motor. Mercury claim that it has the acceleration of a Mercury 3.5hp 4-stroke petrol outboard. Using transverse flux motor technology, this engine has an even higher level of torque density than would normally be expected from a 750W electric motor. As a result, it can swing a large-diameter three-blade propeller, providing performance out of proportion to its size. Consequently, Mercury claim that the 7.5e is more efficient than any electrically powered competitor, and that this technology is an industry first for an electric outboard.

▶ Offered with tiller or remote steering, these engines are ideal for powering small boats, tenders and kayaks. Mercury have created an entire propulsion system, fully integrated from the controls through to the props and digital gauges – and there is an all-new mobile app. ‘Innovative ease of use’, ‘swappable batteries’ and a quick-connect mounting system make set-up and operation easy, plus there is a full-colour display showing battery capacity and an estimated range. The battery is mounted within the cowling, though the actual electric motor is situated inside the torpedo housing at the bottom of the outboard leg. The battery can be quickly removed through a hatch in the top of the cowling and is effectively ‘plug and play’ when you come to fit it for use again. If you need additional range, extra batteries can be carried and easily swapped over when needed.

▶ An efficient smart battery charger is included with the engine package, and a 1kWh lithium-ion battery, built exclusively for marine use, has been developed in partnership with Mastervolt – established specialists in this field. This 48V power source has been drop-tested and is IP67 rated for water resistance. A fast charger is under development. The 7.5e sports a quick-connect mounting system and weighs in at under 20kg without battery, the latter weighing 6.6kg. It has been designed for easy carriage ashore with its folding tiller doubling as a carry handle, and for those wanting remotes, it will be available with digital shift controls for small-boat helms.

▶ **The 7.5e will soon be followed by the Avator 20e and Avator 35e, which we can suppose will have outputs of 2kW and 3.5kW, respectively.**



MERCURY
7.5e

MERCURY
7.5e

1: The engine has been designed with portability in mind.
2: The battery can be easily fitted and removed.
3: It links to Mercury’s new marine app.

▶ Each electric outboard is crafted with many components that are recyclable or reusable. The Avator 7.5e is the first propulsion system from Mercury to be compatible with the all-new Mercury Marine app – available for iOS and Android devices. Boaters can access the free app for basic functionality, including a library of tutorials, and the ability to connect with a dealer for support. Adding a Mercury SmartCraft Connect module to the outboard unlocks further advanced features of the app. This includes a GPS map for planning passages and visualized range estimates. The app can also be used to track speed, battery level, outboard hours and system notifications. It is claimed to provide the most complete set of performance data available for any electric outboard.

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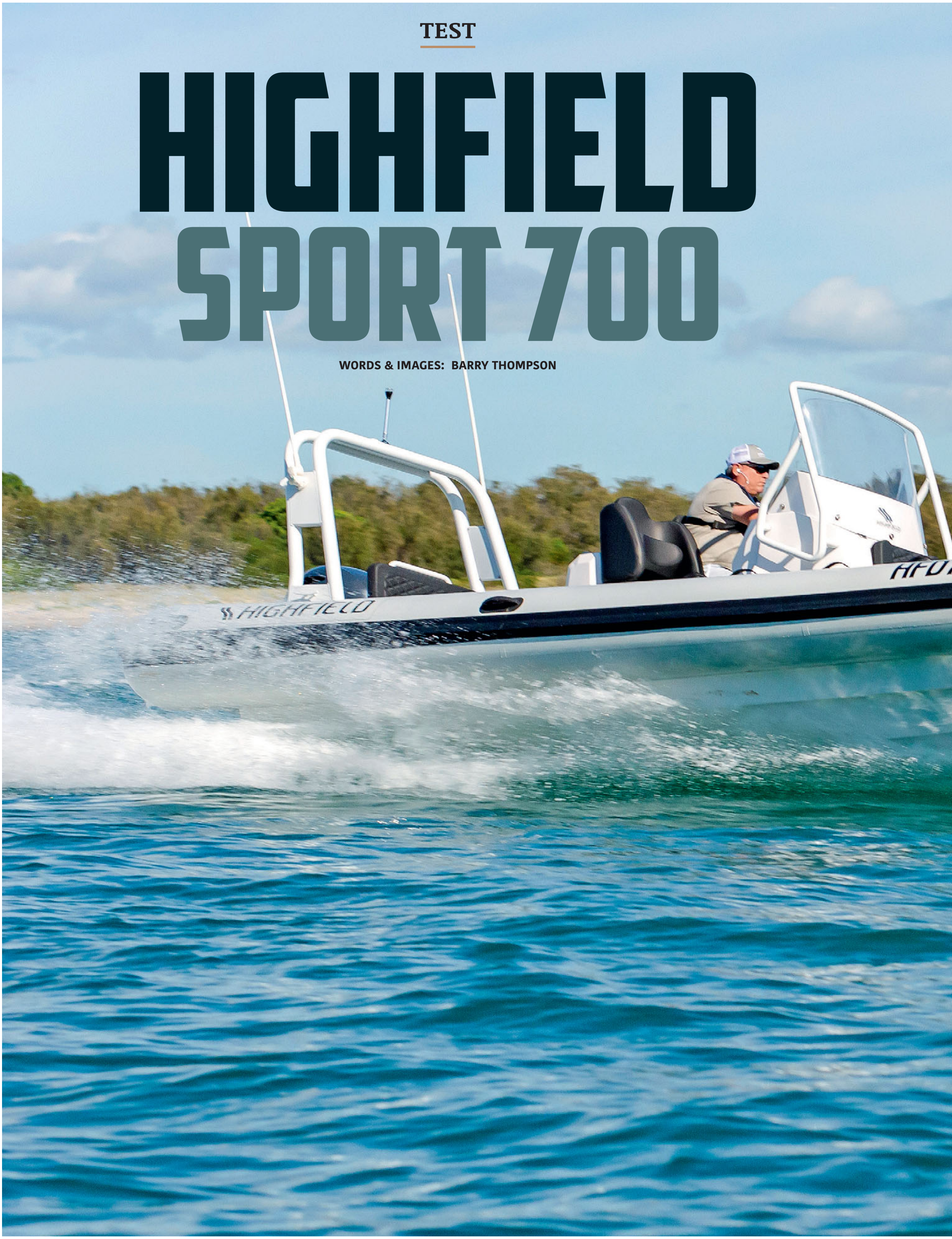
HIGHFIELD SPORT 700

WORDS & IMAGES: BARRY THOMPSON



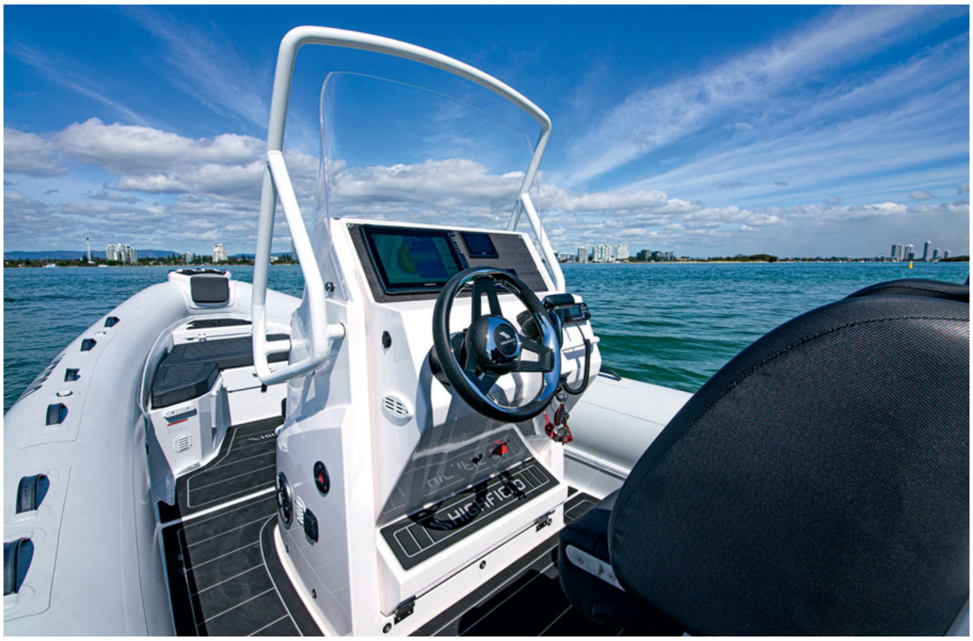
Highfield Boats specialise in building functional, offshore-styled, alloy-hulled RIBs. In this review, PBR correspondent Barry Thompson tests the merits of the company's latest Sport 700 and discovers an ultra-deep-vee RIB of great diversity.

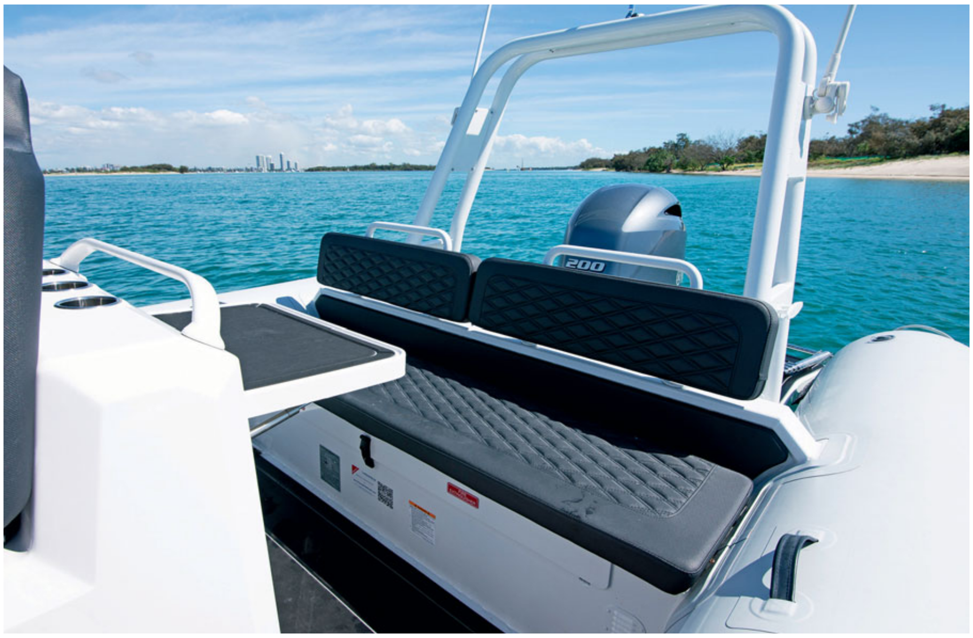
French/Chinese boat manufacturer Highfield Boats claim they are the largest builder of alloy RIBs in the world. With 43 models spread over five prime ranges, the company says it produces an astonishing 10,000 boats per annum. In fact, it has been developing its luxury Sport range for over nine years and now offers 16 models ranging from 3m to 9m in length. The 2023 Sport 700 is one of Highfields's very newest, and while benefiting from a deluxe internal upgrade, it retains that same efficient, seagoing, powder-coated alloy hull and Hypalon sponson combination that has become so integral to the brand.

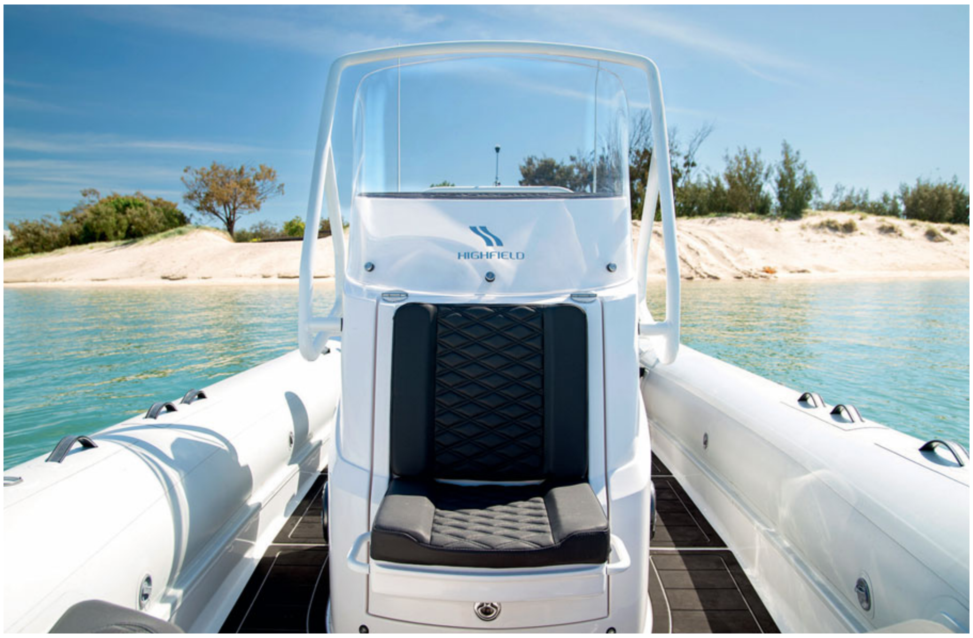
Centre console RIBs are a design classification in their own right, having become by far the most popular form of RIB within the global 5m to 10m market. Highfield's Sport range comprises eight centre console models, each following a similar design, albeit the layout of each is determined by the internal area relevant to each model.

Features and layout

The Sport 700 has an internal beam of close to 1.5m and an internal length of 5m. This means there's plenty of real estate available! To best utilise the space, the console is wide enough to allow room on either side to transit to and from the bow. The deck's forward section features a V-shaped settee with a large storage locker







beneath. It was good to note that gas struts had been fitted to this unit to take the effort out of opening the heaviest hatches. With the squab infill provided, you can transform the entire forward deck area into one big sun pad. However, if you're more interested in fishing than acquiring a tan, with the squabs removed, the foredeck transforms into an ideal casting platform.

THE 2023 HIGHFIELD SPORT 700 IS A FINE EXAMPLE OF HOW VERSATILE RIBS CAN BE.

The central seat fitted to the front of the console is hinged for access to the additional storage found within. The console seat is then ideally placed when the foredeck removable table is set in place. A separate anchor locker with flush-mounted fairlead, recessed lights and a drop-down cleat to its pulpit is a very likable feature too. Owners will appreciate this when using the foredeck as a boarding platform. No more stubbed toes!

While the test boat was fitted with a single Garmin Echomap Ultra, there is sufficient within the helm console dash for a pair of 12in MFD screens. Also included on the test boat's technical list was a Fusion head unit, a Yamaha Command Link display and an Icom VHF radio.

LEFT: 1. Good footrest position and adjustable helm seating. **2.** Solid rear hinged bench seat. **3.** A good size perspex screen offing adequate protection from the elements.

SPECIFICATIONS

Year launched: 2022
LOA: 6.99m
Beam (external): 2.93m
Beam (internal): 1.70m
Deadrise (transom): 26 degrees
Tube diameter: 565mm
Trailerable weight: 2500kg (approx.)
Max. speed: 41 knots
Construction: Aluminium/Hypalon
Fuel capacity: 285L
Water capacity: 40L
Engine: Yamaha F200
Max. power: 250hp
Flooring: EVA
MFD: Garmin Echomap Ultra

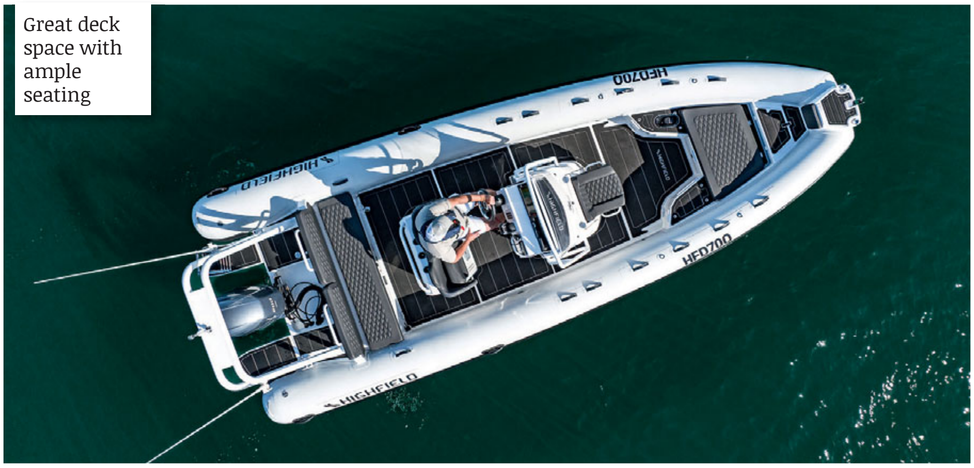
CONTACT

www.highfieldboats.com

PRICE

As tested: £91,242.85

THANKS TO ITS CONSTRUCTION, IT'S REASONABLY LIGHT ON THE TRAILER TO TOW AND FULFILS THE FUNCTIONS OF A HIGHLY VERSATILE CRAFT.



Great deck space with ample seating

A high-quality electronics package of this type is perfectly adequate to serve most needs. Further to the helm, I liked the position of the footrest and the fact that I could move the helm seat to suit my driving position. Seated or standing, the option is therefore yours, with the Perspex screen affording plenty of wind protection in the process (though no bimini was fitted to this boat, it is an optional extra that can be ordered).

There is dedicated seating for five people in the self-draining cockpit comprising a pair of forward bucket seats and a full-width aft bench seat. The aft seat is then hinged for access to the technical space and storage within. In addition to the removable table, drinks holders are plentiful and internal LED lighting illuminates the deck's EVA teak surfaces.

As for the aft deck, this features a pair of storage lockers and a robust powder-coated alloy tow mount complete with a stern-mounted light. Either side of the outboard are located two small boarding steps with a drop-down stainless ladder to port. Besides the heavy-duty rubbing strake and a keel guard protection strip fitted as standard, all Highfield Sport RIBs have davit lifting eyes installed.

Performance and handling

Few production boats on the market boast such a deep-vee hull as the Sport 700. In fact, at 26 degrees, I'd describe it as an ultra-deep vee. This significantly benefits the boat's

1. Retractable swimming ladder **2.** Onboard shower **3.** Detailing to the upholstery. **4.** LED light feature to bow.

THE 2023 HIGHFIELD SPORT 700 IS A FINE EXAMPLE OF HOW VERSATILE RIBS CAN BE.

performance through rougher seas and makes for a more sea-kindly ride. In fact, the boat eats chop for dinner, and thanks to its strong, robust construction, it's capable of taking plenty of punishment if called upon to do so.

The Highfield's alloy construction affords the vessel ultimate rigidity and stiffness. But fear not, its metal construction does not produce any 'tinnie' slap, and throughout our test, no

PERFORMANCE & FUEL DATA

RPM	Knots	LPH	NM range
1000	4.0	3.1	349.3
1500	5.6	5.3	286.0
2000	7.5	8.4	241.7
2500	12.2	12.6	262.1
3000	16.3	15.1	292.3
3500	21.6	19.8	295.4
4000	25.4	28.2	243.9
4500	29.5	35.8	223.1
5000	33.5	50.1	181.0
5500	36.8	62.2	160.2
6000	41.0	75.0	146.6

HF1700
HIGHFIELD

wave impact could be detected resonating through the structure. To all intents and purposes, and from a user's perspective, there is little or no difference between the alloy and the equivalent GRP in terms of hull noise. But from a sustainability standpoint, one advantage aluminium most certainly has over GRP is that it can be recycled ad infinitum.

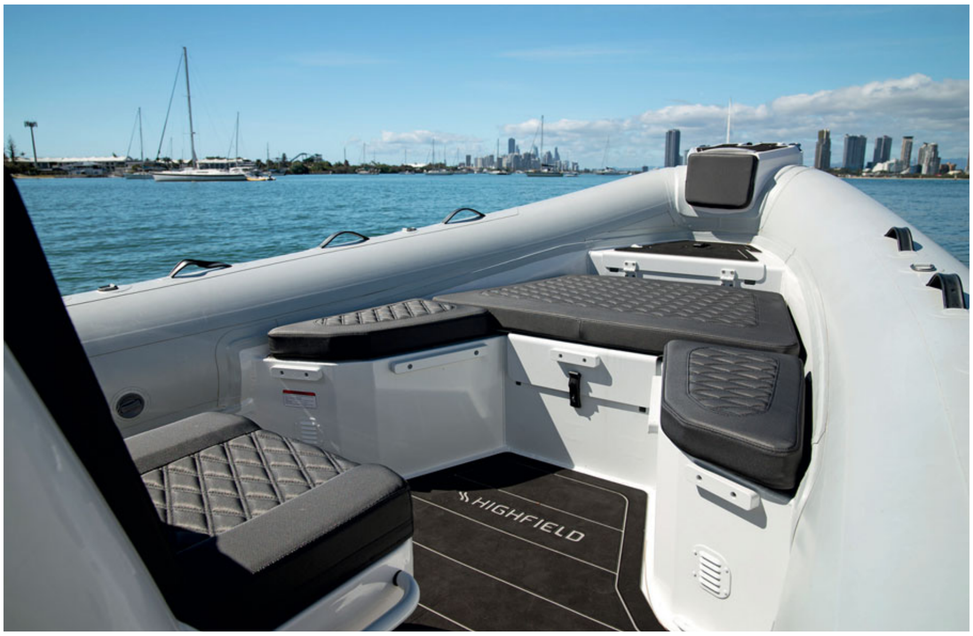
Due to the RIB's 'non-radical' design type, its tube-to-hull relationship ensures the type of stability at rest most people would seek when contemplating a rigid inflatable. Despite the Sport 700's ultra-deep-vee hull form, at rest, the aft section of the tube/sponson sits in contact with the waterline, but then once underway, the hull's hydrodynamics lifts the tubes sufficiently so as not to incur undue drag.

IT'S REASONABLY LIGHT ON THE TRAILER TO TOW AND FULFILS THE FUNCTIONS OF A HIGHLY VERSATILE CRAFT.

The hull's high-lift, reverse-chine design, the rubbing strake's downward-contoured leading edge and the bow's raised sheer and fine entry all combine to produce a dry ride. This attribute is even more relevant in the case of the Sport 700, as the helm console windscreen is not a large wrap-around affair.

While the Highfield Sport 700 is rated for single outboards from as low as 115hp through to those with a maximum of 250hp, the Yamaha F200 fitted to our test boat proved a very likable option. At flat-water full throttle, we hit 41 knots on the GPS, which means that for family and water sports use, this maximum speed will deliver the necessary thrill factor while remaining within sensible bounds. Fuel burn was around 75Lph, which by my estimation gives something in the order of a 150nm range. That said, if you reduce the throttle down to 30 knots, in line with the engine's cruising 'sweet spot' of 4500rpm, the fuel burn drops to a very acceptable 35.8Lph and the range jumps to 225nm.

The 2023 Highfield Sport 700 is a fine example of how versatile RIBs can be. It's a boat that's equally at home performing the role of a tender to a larger vessel, a family sports craft or an adventure-styled day boat with offshore capability. Thanks to its construction, it's reasonably light on the trailer to tow and fulfils the functions of a highly versatile craft. Well-appointed and nicely finished, the Highfield Sport 700 scores pretty highly in my book. PBR



RIGHT: 1. Garmin Echomap Ultra is fitted with adequate space for a pair of screens. **2.** Inset fuel filter. **3.** Guard /grab rail. **4.** Bow seating and storage. **5.** VHF radio and Fusion head unit. **6.** Anchor fairlead and LED lights.

www.yamaha-motor.eu/gb/en/

Yamaha XTO 450

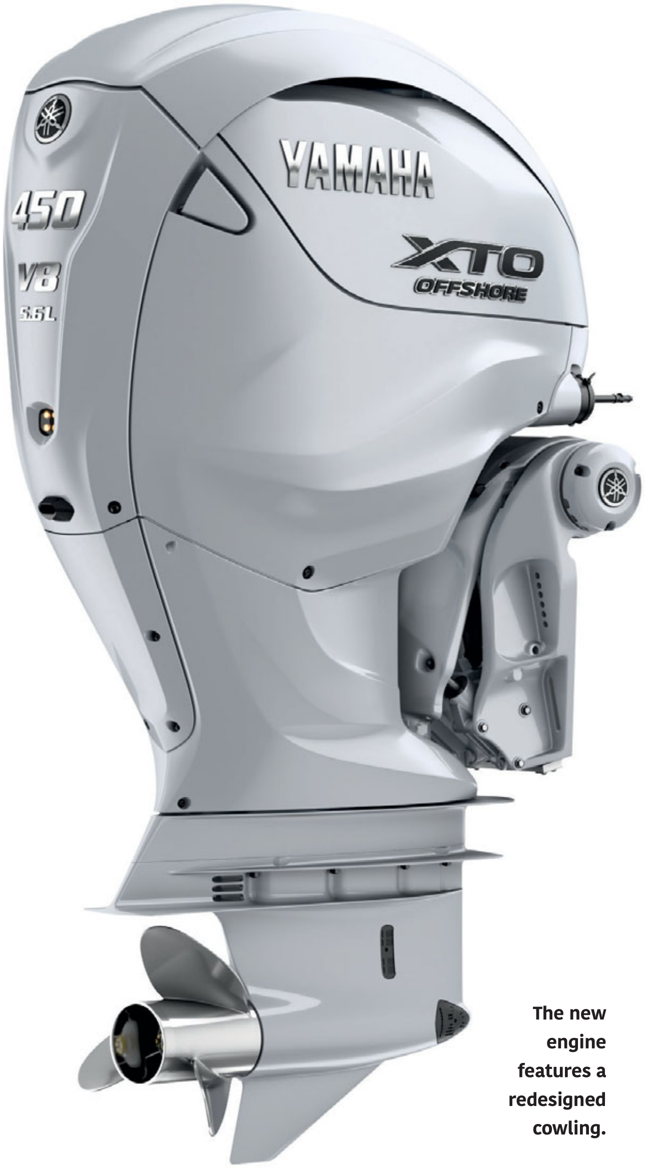
More punch and less weight with Yamaha's new flagship V8 outboard.

Yamaha's launch of their new 5.6L XTO 450 is not too much of a surprise. The recent big-outboard race has likely had some bearing on the new XTO losing a few pounds, while gaining 25hp over the previous flagship XTO 425. The XTO, or 'Extreme Thrust Output', was the first production big-capacity naturally aspirated outboard engine and was aimed at providing a dependable broad spread of power for the bigger offshore powerboat.

The new XTO 450 sits above the still current XTO 425, and a lower-powered XTO 400 has been introduced for those that need less power while still enjoying the middle-range grunt that only a big V8 can provide. The weight on both the XTO 450 and XTO 400 has dropped to 437kg in the lightest forms, while there have also been other improvements. Torque has been improved across the power spectrum, and thanks to a new 'Thrust-enhancing exhaust system' that expels the exhaust through three different routes, Yamaha claim to have improved thrust. There is a new 'TotalTilt function with integrated tilt limit' enabling the engine to be powered clear of the water at the touch of a button – which can be custom-set to each boat. The latest models also feature an integrated Helm Master EX functioning propeller light, and the outboards' electric charging system has been upgraded. The new high-output alternator system enables batteries to charge faster and at lower RPM, allowing more electronics to be run at rest, including appliances like a cool box.

A noise reduction silencer has also been added to the new engines, providing quieter cruising at speed, while the in-water gear lubrication change system now allows for 'on-water oil changing'. Both the XTO 450 and the XTO 400 have the advantage of direct fuel injection, which is beneficial for both economy and power delivery. The XTO 425 was the first outboard engine to employ direct fuel injection. Though it has been used in the automotive world for some years, Yamaha have proven this system's reliability in the more demanding world of marine power.

Designed to be used with Yamaha's Helm Master EX boat control system, it's now easier than before to link the XTO 450 and XTO 400 to the Helm Master EX boat control system. Helm Master EX opens up joystick control from anywhere on the boat and features AutoPilot, FishPoint and SetPoint position control technology. Helm Master berthing and position control has now been enhanced by the integration of Vetus's new Bow Pro bow thruster. Joystick control of a twin-outboard set-up, though easier than independently vectoring the engines, has its limitations, especially with longer boats. Manoeuvring response, turning circle and simple sideways movement are substantially improved by including a bow thruster in the equation. Bow Pro is a variable-control brushless bow thruster, so power delivery is both quiet and proportional to the needs dictated by the Helm Master joystick. Available later this year, the XTO 450 and XTO 400 come in pearlescent white, as well as traditional Yamaha grey, while both models feature a new cowling with improved ducting and air vents.



The new engine features a redesigned cowling.

The new Vetus Bow Pro bow thruster can be integrated into the Helm Master EX.

Above: A single XTO 450 is a good alternative to twin engines.

YAMARIN
Yamarin 67DC
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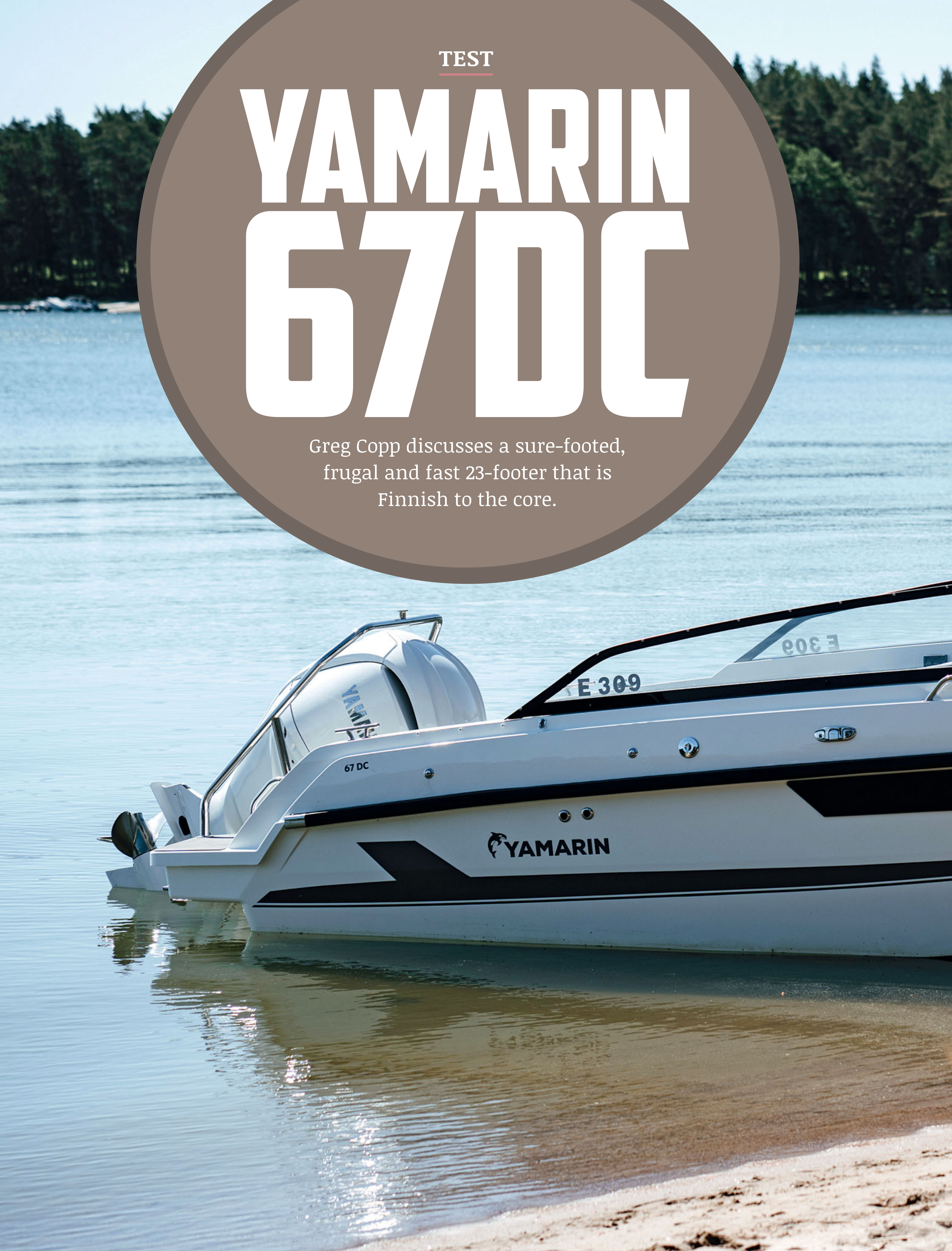
TEST

YAMARIN 67DC

Greg Copp discusses a sure-footed, frugal and fast 23-footer that is Finnish to the core.


E 309
67 DC
YAMARIN

Launched only last year, the 67DC is the latest from this Finnish company and replaces the 65DC and the 68DC. Yamarin's day cruisers, traditional in concept and discreetly contemporary in appearance, are the type of boat that will always prove popular, and this one certainly makes the case. It is an archetypal sports cuddy with a two-berth cabin, built for 40-knot fun and coastal cruising – skill sets in which it is well qualified.

The profile of the boat is low, and this serves to enhance its wide beam. It is 6.76m in length and 2.55m in the beam, just 5cm slimmer than its bigger sibling, the 8m 79DC. This girth works well, as in the cockpit you feel you are in a bigger boat, and consequently its CE rating for eight is not unrealistic – as can be the case with middleweight sports boats. You step on board via one of the bathing platforms that flank the engine, with the waterskiing arch providing the ideal handhold. Both aft quarters house large Flexiteek-covered lockers, which are perfect for throwing fenders and warps into – and with room to spare. Immediately forward of these, a hinging deck section running across the beam houses the bimini top, ready to be quickly deployed if the weather turns – a simple concept, which we put to good effect on the day within several minutes.

The cockpit can sit eight, six of which can realistically fit around the folding table to eat. This is achieved by the double helm seat having its seat back folded forward, creating an aft-facing seat. If you want a sunbed, this double seat extends across to the aft seat courtesy of an infill section. This could alternatively be used as a double berth should you need extra sleeping space, or if you prefer to sleep under the bimini cover. There is plenty of storage under the seats, notably the aft section, which opens to provide access to the batteries, system switches, fuses and seacocks. In the port quarter of this aft locker, the cut-off switches and breakers are neatly enclosed within a panel. The two batteries sit back in each quarter – so their 20kg weight counterbalances each other. The scuppers' seacocks that feed into the splash well are easily accessed, and the main bilge pump is under the removable floor panel of the locker, the latter being lined and finished with a level of diligence that matches the system layout.

FUEL FIGURES

RPM	SPEED*	LPH	NMPG
2000	7.0	14.0	2.3
2500	14.0	17.6	3.1
3000	22.0	22.8	4.1
3500	28.0	32.6	3.9
4000	32.5	40.1	3.7
4500	37.0	48.3	3.5
5000	41.1	68.3	2.5
5430(WOT)	46.0	85.6	2.2

Lowest planing speed is 13 knots returning 3.0nmpg.

Most economical sweet spot is 24 knots returning 4.2nmpg.

Ideal cruising speed is 30 knots returning 3.8nmpg.

0 – 30 knots: Seven seconds.

*Speed in knots

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If you opt for the ‘Premium Edition’, as in the case of our test boat, you will have a realistic level of domestic extras. These include a hob, a slide-out Dometic fridge, a pressurised water system, a toilet with 30L holding tank, the table, the bimini covers and other non-domestic options like a bow thruster, a waterskiing arch and a fold-out bow ladder for beach landings. The forward cabin is the typical sports cuddy set-up – limited headroom, but with a good amount of natural light and a large double berth. There is a manual toilet on the starboard side under the side seat cushion, a realistic feature for any family boat. Foredeck access is easy thanks to the steps leading to the windscreen gate, which leads you to the pulpit and anchor locker, complete with its bow ladder. Setting out fenders can be done from within the cockpit, so going forward is only needed to secure the bowline, and amidships the 67DC is fitted with rather neat fold-flat spring cleats, which can also be accessed from within the boat should you need to.

> THIS IS ONE OF THE MOST CAPABLE AND COMPREHENSIVELY EQUIPPED 23FT SPORTS CUDDY BOATS ON THE MARKET ...

This craft is fitted standard with quite an impressive electronics package. The Yamarin Q system in 10in format (16in is extra) is a 10in MFD that heads up a wide range of features. Interfacing with Yamaha’s electronics, you can read all engine data at a glance, but you also have a full navigation suite, including extensive charts and sonar. However, it goes quite a bit further, offering Internet connection and a Wi-Fi hotspot to other devices. Consequently you have a weather function, and there is an app enabling you to keep tabs on engine data, servicing needs and instruction manuals/videos. As well as the 16in Q system upgrade, you can expand further with a fish finder that reads down to 270m, AIS, radar and a sound system that includes FM/DAB radio. Driven by a quad-core processor, this touch screen MFD includes a two-year European data plan and automatic online updates.

Behind the wheel

My first impression was that I wanted a higher helm seat. It does have a flip-up bolster, which is intended for people to lean into when standing, but it was not high enough for me. I am 6ft, so this is a subjective point, but I ended up sitting on the bolster – which was fine, only folding it down when I wanted to sit lower and totally out of the weather. When seated on the bolster I was pretty much out of the wind, but for some spirited driving you may want to stand to get that perfect view over the bow. For that you will need an adjustable-height seat, which is not possible considering the helm seat converts to an aft-facing cockpit seat.

The 67DC is fitted with some fairly large trim

1. The toilet sits under the seat cushions.

2. The pressurized water system.

3. Fold-out spring cleats.

> IF YOU OPT FOR THE ‘PREMIUM EDITION’ AS OUR TEST BOAT CAME, THEN YOU WILL HAVE A REALISTIC LEVEL OF DOMESTIC EXTRAS.

tabs, which, sitting on the extremities of a wide-beam boat, are very effective. However, unless you have a fairly substantial beam sea you are unlikely to need them – or if the loading of the boat dictates some correctional trimming. Driven to its ‘full sporting potential’, this boat needs the tabs up, and with a limited degree of engine trim out, as the natural fore and aft trim is very good. She is quick – hitting 30 knots in 7 seconds, and moments later you are touching 40. Above this speed, the 67DC likes 50% trim out to reach its maximum of 46 knots; in this process you can hear that distinctive Yamaha V6 exhaust tone. Below 35 knots she wants just 25% trim, which is a good point-and-shoot setting that you can leave the boat at for most of the time. Our test boat was fitted with Yamaha’s Trim Assist system, which automatically adjusts the outboard trim angle to the engine speed, and the boat speed input from the GPS. However, it had not been calibrated and set to the boat, which is something normally done by the dealer on commissioning – enabling the helmsman to simply drive the boat while the system makes

RIGHT: 1. A big beamy cockpit. 2. Easy access forward. 3. Access is easy and safe. 4. Realistically you will want the seat bolsters up to drive.

SPECIFICATIONS

LOA: 6.76m
Beam: 2.55m
Draft: Max 0.70m.
Displacement with engine: 1700kgs
Power options: Yamaha F150 to F250 outboards.
Fuel capacity: 195 litres
RCD category: C for 8
Test engine: 250hp Yamaha F250

PERFORMANCE

46.0 knots (2 way average) sea conditions moderate wind F4 – F5 with 50% fuel, crew 2.

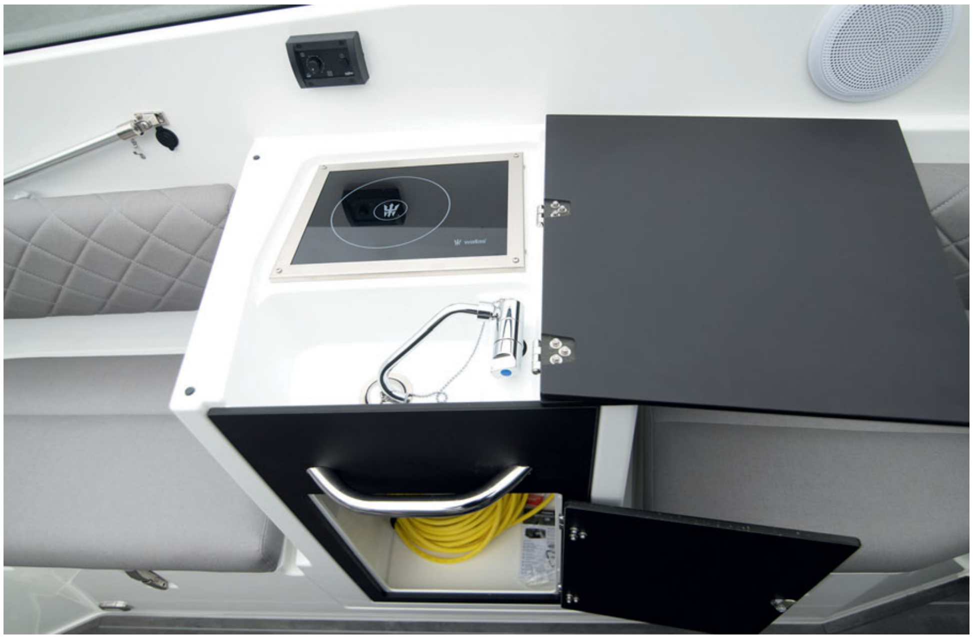
CONTACT

www.theboatshop.co.uk
www.yamarin.com

PRICE

As tested: £86,000 inc VAT.

67 DC
YAMARIN



all the trim calculations.

In the turns, her beam provides plenty of security, tracking round in a composed manner. Our test boat had hydraulic steering, which is steady and reasonably firm, providing a good degree of feedback, while being responsive enough for you to throw her from lock to lock in a series of hard turns. You can opt for Yamaha's digital electronic steering (DES) if you want a lighter wheel, but this is a matter of personal preference. The hull is typically Yamarin in so much as it is tough and sharper than its beam implies. Though I was unable to ascertain what the transom deadrise angle was, I will make an educated guess at 20 degrees, based on other Yamarin hulls – though on the water it actually feels sharper. On our test day the weather picked up in the afternoon, which the 67DC ran through with ease. The short chop was easily cut through, as the forward lines of the hull sharpen considerably towards the forefoot. On one occasion, coming off a sharp ridge of water at 40 knots, the boat landed without groan or complaint, composed itself and then got on with the job in hand.

Verdict

This is one of the most capable and comprehensively equipped 23ft sports cuddy boats on the market, which is not too surprising considering it hails from a part of the world that takes boatbuilding seriously. In its tested form, with the 'Premium Edition', this boat wants for little, and even comes with a bow thruster. I would not consider it specified to a more basic level, as the cost savings are small and the versatility compromised. You can order the 67DC with smaller engine options, but again you save only on the purchase price. The highly reliable Yamaha F250 produces good economy coupled to this boat's efficient hull, which at the 30-knot cruising speed it easily achieves would not be improved on by a lower-powered engine.

RIGHT: 1. The galley covered. 2. The galley's work top folds out. 3. The fore cabin enjoys plenty of natural light.

WHAT WE THOUGHT

FOR

- High-quality fit, finish and build quality
- Fuel efficient
- Predictable sure-footed handling
- Soft ride
- Cockpit space
- Easy foredeck access

AGAINST

- The helm seating could benefit from more height.

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Return to Paradise

PBR's Channel Island correspondent, Joe Mourant, helps us blow away the last of the winter cobwebs by setting a course for the paradisaic Chausey archipelago. After reading this article, you may well be tempted to plan a summer voyage to this enchanting location yourself …

Jolly France

© Jason Masterman.

© Jason Masterman.

THE STUNNINGLY LOVELY ARCHIPELAGO OF CHAUSEY HAS ALWAYS ENJOYED A STATUS AS A SANCTUARY OFF THE BEATEN TRACK ...

As we cautiously begin to move beyond the era of the pandemic, adventures previously postponed can be looked at anew. Here in the Channel Islands, there is no better encapsulation of new horizons appearing than our ability to visit the French archipelago of Chausey once again. Sadly, this incomparable cruising ground has remained out of bounds to boaters over the last few years. But of all the delights accessible from a Channel Islands base, perhaps none is more beautiful than this tiny collection of islands lying just beyond the boundary of the UK's territorial waters.

Most at fault were the changing political circumstances, which were quickly followed by COVID, both of which conspired to make cruising between the UK and France much more difficult for us all. In some cases, day tripping to Chausey being a prime example, cruising became nigh-on impossible. Based as I am in Jersey, only 15 or so nautical miles from the French coast, I've felt the new Brexit rules and the accompanying prohibition of free movement keenly. Journeying across to the Breton and Norman coasts has always been something boaters here have taken for granted, and when it ceased being possible, the more optimistic skippers among us looked ahead to the point where some degree of normality would be restored, whereupon we could once again enjoy adventures to France's 'Emerald Coast'.

Out of reach

The stunningly lovely archipelago of Chausey has always enjoyed a status as a sanctuary off the beaten track, and its relative isolation ended up working firmly against prospective UK cruisers to the isles. Regulations that were suddenly more strictly enforced required all visitors to France to enter via an official port of entry (POE). This closed off entirely many smaller ports and anchorages, as their size precluded the requisite customs infrastructure necessary for them to hold POE status. Chausey is a true example of a much-loved anchorage suddenly having been shut out by these rules.

Stamping passports upon arrival in France and again on departure at one of these POEs was mandated and appointments had to be made in advance with customs departments to do this. Chausey not possessing POE status meant that to land there, the nearest such port to first visit and gain entry stamps was the one located around 10 miles away in Granville. The same trip would then need to be taken after visiting Chausey to gain exit stamps. This could all take the best part of a day, without even factoring in Granville being a tidal port and hence closed for much of each day, and that would just be for travel necessary to gain passport stamps! Practically speaking, then, Chausey was a no-go unless a visit there was folded into a much longer trip to France, with much toing and froing to the mainland being undertaken. Chausey's stock trade has traditionally been day trippers, so these limitations were all particularly unwelcome. Thank goodness, things have improved.

Chausey island lighthouse

© Daboost Shutterstock

HISTORY OF CHAUSEY

In common with the other Channel Islands, Chausey has at different times in history belonged to, and been fought over by, Great Britain and France and was occupied by German forces during WWII.

The French industrialist and titan of automotive manufacturing Louis Renault repurposed the Napoleonic fort on Chausey during the 1920s to create a grand residence and business retreat, and this most sizeable of the island's dwellings is today known as Chateau Renault.

The island has only 30 or so permanent inhabitants, although this number increases hugely during the summer when the seasonal workers and tourists arrive. From the mid-19th century until just after the war, approximately 500 quarrymen lived in Chausey mining granite, which was much sought after around France and was used, among other things, for pavements and grand residences in Paris.

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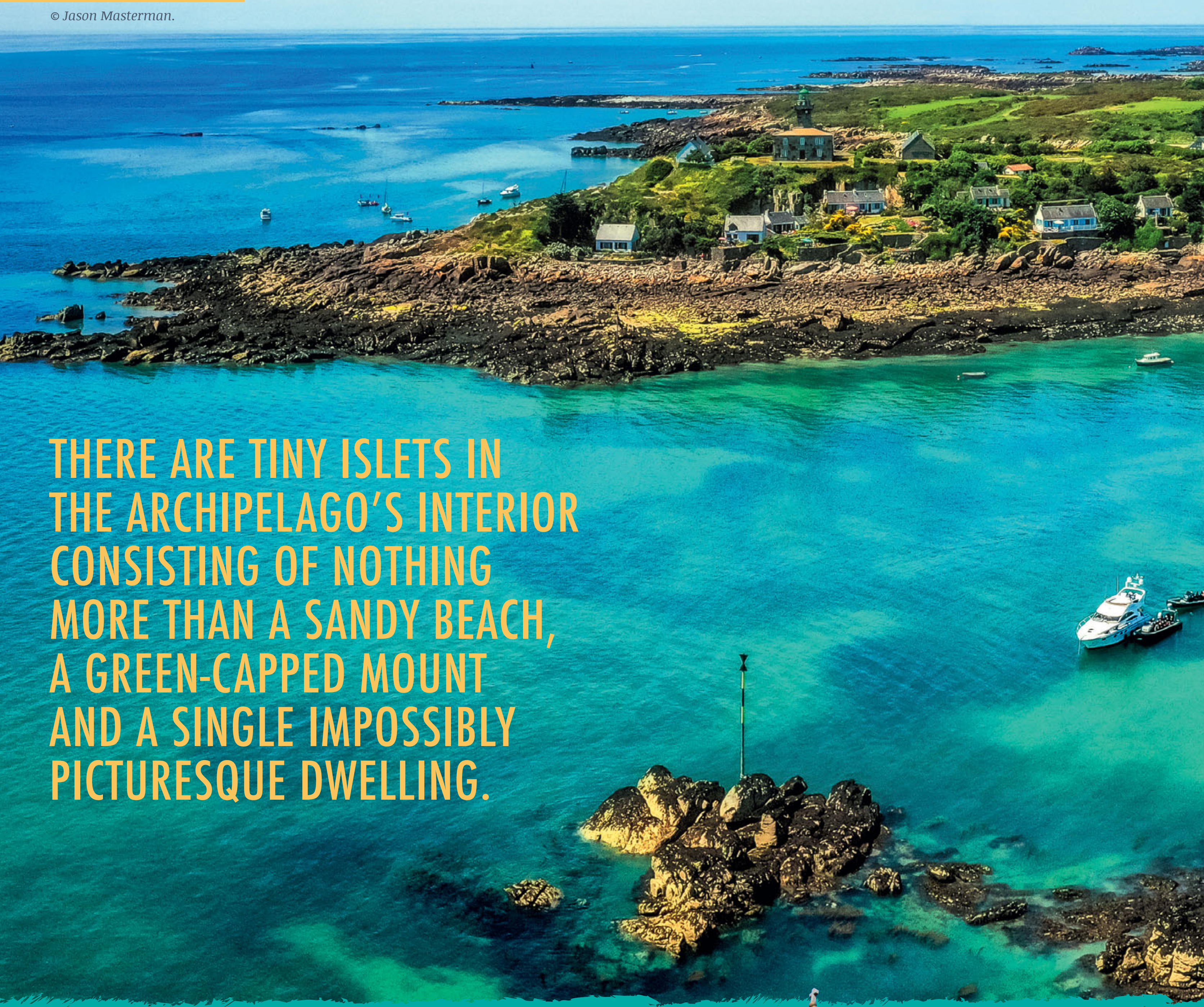

THERE ARE TINY ISLETS IN THE ARCHIPELAGO'S INTERIOR CONSISTING OF NOTHING MORE THAN A SANDY BEACH, A GREEN-CAPPED MOUNT AND A SINGLE IMPOSSIBLY PICTURESQUE DWELLING.

Secluded sanctuary

The entrancing group of rocks, sandbars and small islands that form the archipelago are, geologically speaking, part of the Channel Islands. They sit just a short cruise south-east of one of the United Kingdom's most unique marine habitats and its most southerly point, Jersey's Les Minquiers reef. As is so often the case throughout the Bay of Saint-Malo, the massive tidal range in Chausey adds to the adventure: a 13- to 14-metre rise and fall of the tide on springs revealing 365 islets at low tide and obscuring all but 52 of those come the high. The largest of the islands forming the archipelago, and the main attraction during a visit, will invariably be Grande-Île. Here you'll find the tiny handful of businesses that exist on the islands, including two fine restaurants and one small but excellent hotel, the latter possessing the only visitor moorings.

The safest option to reach Grande-Île will be the southern approach into Chausey Sound, which uses lateral buoyage to guide visitors from the deep water south of the archipelago into a channel that can be accessed at any height of tide. This leads to the moorings and landing areas. There is also a very picturesque northern approach to the Sound, which can be tackled

Old traditional church on Chausey island.

© Daboost Shutterstock

most safely in the last third of the flood. However, the pilotage for this route is significantly more complex and involves a sequence of visual transits and a close adherence to the leading lines. Only a confident navigator aboard a suitable vessel will feel happy tackling the northern approach, but it is very popular with craft visiting from Jersey, as it saves the motoring otherwise necessary to reach the southern entrance to the Sound.

Visitors welcome

Coming in from the south, cardinal marks on prominent drying heads assist a skipper in piloting northwards up the Sound to the visitor buoyage. Many boats transit this area throughout all states of tide, including large, fast ferries arriving from the French mainland throughout the day. Constant vigilance is required as some of this traffic can behave erratically, particularly if the skipper has enjoyed an afternoon in one of the two fine restaurants overlooking the Sound! Not every shoal and head is marked directly by buoyage either, so the importance of the helm wearing a high-quality pair of polarised sunglasses can hardly be overstated as that may be their best chance of dodging a menacing rock or shoal lurking just under the surface. (Of course, if your vessel is blessed with the latest forward-looking sonar, the need to use polarised sunglasses might be lessened a little!)

The visitor moorings consist of a limited number of white fore and aft buoys, and unsurprisingly these are often exceptionally busy in high season, particularly at weekends. Rafting several boats to a mooring is therefore typical in Chausey, and having sufficient fenders aboard ready to deploy as necessary is essential in the skipper's final preparations to moor. Some skill in close-quarter handling will be required at this juncture as the Sound is very narrow in places, and there are many drying areas on either side of the channel on a

PLACES TO STAY AND EAT

▶ The island has only one small hotel, the Hotel du Fort et des Iles. Dating back to 1928, this family-owned hotel has stunning views over the Sound from its perch on the island's highest point and has a terrific restaurant that offers both indoor and al fresco dining on its terraced lawn.

▶ Le Sound is the island's other restaurant and offers superb views and excellent fare in a slightly more casual setting than the hotel.

▶ Numerous self-catering and Airbnb options can be found online, with Gîtes de La Ferme de Chausey being a particular standout.

Grande Ile
© J. Mourant

lower tide. The swift currents that rush down the Sound, coupled with the busy boat traffic in the area, mean that a skipper may not have as much room or as much time as they would like when finding and then picking up a mooring or coming alongside another boat to raft.

Tides and tethers

When tendering to Grande-Île, usually to the prominent large stone slip, the tide will often be running strongly through the Sound and that usually isn't the best time to work on your rowing skills. On a high enough tide, the ferries will likewise use this same slip, motoring their bulk against the rubberised pilings on the slip itself to hold station. A decent outboard on the tender is therefore essential kit as this is most certainly not an area to find yourself with inadequate propulsion and a ferry bearing down! There is also a large wooden pier structure (awash at high water), which is primarily used throughout each day by the ferries bringing day trippers over from Granville, Saint-Malo and Dinard. While this cannot be moored upon for any length of time, it can be used to drop off passengers after the main slip dries at around half tide, and it will have sufficient water for most power craft even at the bottom of the tide. A savvy skipper will drop their party at whichever slip most suits the tidal height before mooring and then tender in solo or with a single crew in order to lighten the load during the several hundred-metre trip in from the visitor buoys.

Grande-Île

Grande-Île itself is only 1.5km by 0.5km (just over 100 acres in total), so traversing the island doesn't take long at all. However, its picturesque green expanse is criss-crossed by many different pathways to explore, and there's always an out-of-the-way place to sit and enjoy a spectacular view. Also worth mentioning is the enormous expanse of sand, rock and pool revealed by the receding tide each day, increasing the land mass of Grand-Île manyfold. Someone who knows the area and its tides well can guide you on a hike of several miles through this lunar landscape around the low tide, and you'll reach other islands that weren't even visible at high water as you hunt out lobsters, whelks and prawns.

There are fewer than 50 houses on the island, a hotel and several places to buy food and drink.

Some of the dwellings are staggeringly pretty fishermen's cottages, seemingly all but unchanged since their construction centuries ago. Their charm is hard to overstate. Grande-Île's chapel is perched on a hillock close to the main landing slip, and this has commanding views well worth a visit to appreciate. Dating to around 1840, the long years of sun, salt and storms are unmistakably ingrained in the chapel's weather-beaten facade as it sits like a benign watchman guarding the Sound. [Paul – use pic of church here] Numerous self-catering and Airbnb accommodation options for

Chausey Sound
© J. Mourant

CHAUSEY OFFERS MANY POSSIBILITIES TO THOSE WHO PREFER TO EXPLORE FAR FROM THE MADDING CROWD.

Archipelago of Iles de Chausey.
© Mikael Broms/Shutterstock

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Chausey Dolphins. – © M.Molyneaux.

> THERE ARE FEWER THAN 50 HOUSES ON THE ISLAND, A HOTEL AND SEVERAL PLACES TO BUY FOOD AND DRINK.

Chausey have sprung up online, so overnighting here has never been easier.

Grande-Île rises to a plateau on its southern end, and from the highest points there are beautiful views across the archipelago to mainland France. It is quite common to find lovely wooden sailing boats such as the Charles-Marie visiting Chausey from Granville and Saint-Malo, and the sight of these big traditional vessels under full sail immediately transports one back in time. On a clear day, Jersey and Les Minquiers are visible to the north and appear surprisingly close, while off to the far south is the distant and unmistakable silhouette of the abbey at Mont Saint-Michel, an ethereal sight that people on Chausey have looked out upon and enjoyed for more than a thousand years.

Far from the madding crowd

If a skipper prefers to stay on their boat and enjoy an adventure away from Grande-Île and its day trippers, Chausey offers many possibilities to those who prefer to explore far from the madding crowd. There are tiny islets in the archipelago's interior consisting of nothing more than a sandy beach, a green-capped mount and a single impossibly picturesque dwelling. While some areas are signposted to advise that landing is prohibited, there are fantastic opportunities to drop a hook in a sandy bay and picnic, snorkel or paddleboard in absolute peace and quiet. As you approach the archipelago, you will see many boats tucked away deep in its interior at some favoured quiet spot; many skippers I know enjoy visiting here several times each summer and haven't set foot on the main island itself in years!

There are numerous small sandy coves around Chausey, which allow for straightforward access from deeper water and simple anchoring. Port Marie is one such bay, found on Grande-Île's south side, just before the entrance to the Sound. This little bay can often be a much simpler proposition than the visitor moorings if you're happy to stay on the hook. Most of Chausey's little bays offer sheltered lagoon-like conditions fringed with forests of seaweed undulating below the surface, which, when explored, will be found to be teeming with rockfish, prawns, mullet and bass. If venturing further into the reef's interior, it's critical to keep a regular eye on the depth sounder here and compare its readings with a tidal curve (either from an app or the old-school paper variety found in any almanac or chart set) to understand how much water is beneath your keel relative to the expected depth throughout the duration of your anticipated stay. Remember, the tide here could be rising or falling more than 2 metres each hour, so a

The road of the main island of Iles de Chausey. © Mikael Broms /Shutterstock.

Main image: © J. Mourant

1. Dolphin are regular visitors to the islets. © Dr John A Horsfall - iStockphoto.com 2. European seabass © Wrangel - iStockphoto.com. 3. Rock pool shrimp. © vojce - iStockphoto.com

skipper must exercise vigilance with the routes and anchorages selected.

Chenal Beauchamp

When visiting Chausey, I always make time to head to the east and explore the Chenal Beauchamp, a serpentine channel that cuts through the entire archipelago from its northern to southern limits. This can be transited at any height of tide, and passing along the channel on an extremely low tide is incredibly rewarding as an enormous profusion of sandbanks, mussel beds, rocks and gullies are revealed as the tide retreats. As networks of beaches and sandbars dry, a skipper will be tempted to drop a hook or ground the boat and enjoy a secluded spot all to themselves for the duration of the tide's lowest stages. The benefits of outboard engines are manifest in such circumstances as it becomes as easy as choosing a sandy spot on either side of the channel with an adequate degree of shelving, then trimming up and gently beaching the front half of the boat while the stern remains quite happily in deep water. This method allows for a very flexible time frame as you can come and go as you like. It's certainly a more relaxed option than deputising an unfortunate crewmember to be your windlass for the day!

The wild side

On the journey to or from Chausey, there's always an excellent chance that a pod of dolphins might join you for part of the way. If you're fortunate, they may very well take turns bow surfing or leaping about near your boat, putting on an extraordinary display of dolphin aerobatics. While that drama plays out at sea level, huge gannets methodically patrol the skies overhead, searching for prey before plunging into impossibly dramatic dives that explode down into the deep. In recent years, large numbers of bluefin tuna have moved into local waters and are usually to be found in the deep waters between the islands. An enormous bluefin weighing several hundred pounds suddenly erupting out of the water on the hunt is now the holy grail of marine wildlife spotting. This is as jaw-dropping as it is unexpected, usually happening without any warning at all. What better way could there be to cap off a visit to such an extraordinary place than absorbing sights such as these? PBR

THE AUTHOR

▶ **Joe Mourant** is a commercial skipper and RYA Yachtmaster Instructor for Power.

He is based in Jersey and provides tuition, charters and private skippering at

www.lemouriermarine.co.uk

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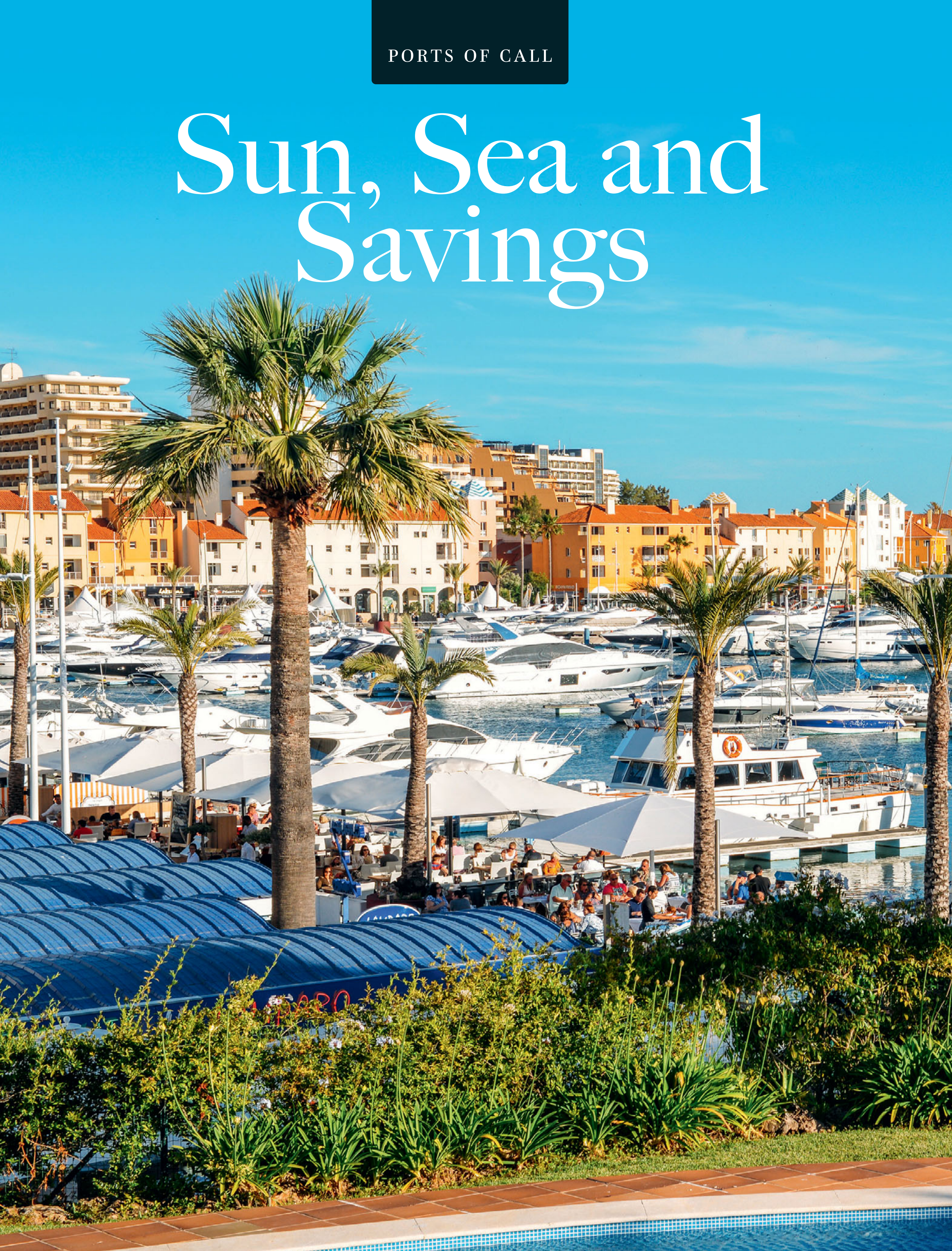

As the winter months finally come to an end and we look forward to the summer sunshine, Mark Featherstone discusses how to extend the boating season, and make savings too, by including a trip to the Algarve and the award-winning Vilamoura Marina complex.

Drifting past the myriad of tempting stands at the Southampton Boat Show, a huge photo caught my eye of a busy southern European marina, a sparkling blue sea and a horseshoe of bustling shops, restaurants and villas built from the warm coloured stone of the region. Later in the week, Vilamoura Marina went on to win the coveted 'International Marina of the Year' award for the second consecutive year running and the sixth time in total. This got me thinking: as the summer is so short in the UK, wouldn't it be wonderful to be able to enjoy your boat for longer by wintering it in an award-winning marina like this? Not only could you add October and November to the boating year, but by storing your boat in the milder climate, you could make the most of the wonderful weather through April and May before trailering it back in time for the UK summer months. With such an enticing possibility of an extended boating season swirling around in my head, a jaunt to the southern shores of Portugal beckoned to find out more ...

My flight took me to Faro, just a 20-minute drive away from Vilamoura Marina, situated in the Algarve's 'Golden Triangle' on the

TIVOLI
MARINA VILAMOURA

Fashionable resort town of Vilamoura.
©BrasilNut1 iStockphoto

The marina complex with 3 fuel pontoons

GASOLINA / PETROL
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1. The marina bar. 2. Everything about the marina says `relax`!

... EXTENDING YOUR BOATING SEASON WILL UNLOCK, INCREASE AND ENHANCE THE PRECIOUS EXPERIENCES THAT ONLY A BOAT CAN DELIVER!

southern coastline between Faro and Albufeira. Vilamoura is a luxury resort chiefly located in a privately owned and unspoiled territory. Originally built around a small harbour, the marina is the perfect base for exploring an area known for its breathtaking natural beauty, pristine beaches and dramatic cliffs. Approaching by sea is straightforward, with east and west beacons clearly guiding you into the waiting arms of the outer harbour, whereupon one is led to the marina itself and its team of marina staff primed to provide you with 24-hour mooring assistance.

A boat owner's heaven

On visiting the marina, it's immediately evident that the staff here take a huge pride in their marina and its surroundings. Walking past a bustling working boatyard, we spotted the generously wide main slip and the care that was being taken to jet its concrete surface clean. Indeed, everywhere was immaculately kept and very secure too. Then, upon arriving in the marina's newly refurbished marble-clad reception area, we were met with a warm welcome and the chance to chat to the staff in the comfortable and contemporary-styled berth holders' lounge. Seen as something of a pioneering development in Portugal, over the last four decades, the marina has become recognised as one of the finest in the world. With 825 berths for boats ranging from 6 to 60 metres in length and up to 4 metres worth of draught, the services offered here are second to none. The fuel jetty, for example, is likewise most impressive, with multiple pumps stretching along one of the longest fuelling pontoons I've ever seen. No queueing for fuel here! The jetty also boasts a free pump-out system for waste water. Water and electricity are also supplied on the pontoons, and there are the usual shower, toilet and laundrette facilities, all of which are pristine and plentiful on both sides of the marina. Lift-out services, dry storage and trailer parking then complete the picture.

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MARINA of the YEAR
FROM towergate

The 2022 Marina of the year award

I was impressed by the array of ancillary businesses offering all manner of services to accommodate the needs of those keeping their vessels here. The boatyard provides general maintenance, marine electronics, gelcoat repair and even an upholsterer should the need arise. With a chandlery located next to the marina reception and even more chandlery outlets along the quayside, boat owners and berth holders are spoilt for choice.

Trailering: all part of the experience

Vilamoura Marina certainly ticks all the boxes for boat owners who either wish to cruise or trailer their boat to southern Portugal. My top tip is to trailer your boat, catching a ferry to Bilbao or Santander, before then taking one's time to meander down to Vilamoura. When the temperatures are high and the sea breezes are moderate, Portugal is the perfect base for autumn and spring adventures. After all, there's nothing more galling than investing in a boat, only to have the weather dictate a realistic family boating season of little more than a few short summer months. Added to this, the excellent storage facilities in a much warmer climate in winter will be kinder to the boat and its equipment.

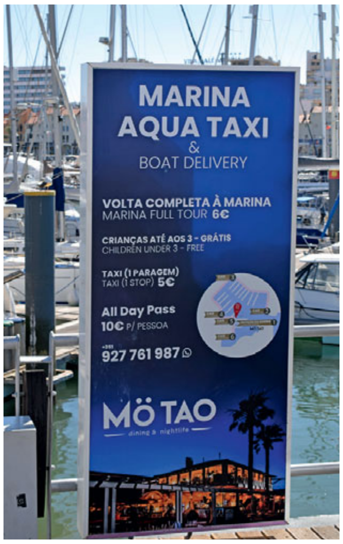
RIGHT: 1. Welcome to Vilamoura Marina. 2. The bertholders lounge is contemporary and comfortable.

MARINA
Vilamoura

Vilamoura Marina sunset.
© Iuri S Design - Shutterstock

FAMILIES AND COUPLES ALIKE CAN HAVE SO MANY WONDERFUL LAND-BASED AND SEAFARING ADVENTURES FROM THIS GLAMOUROUS PORT.

Once your boat is launched and settled in her berth, with flights to Faro Airport being so plentiful, you have the flexibility as well to visit your boat throughout the autumn and spring. Vilamoura has lots of apartments and hotels to suit all pockets if you don't have accommodation on your boat. If your pocket is sufficiently deep, you might consider a stay at the stunning five-star Tivola Marina Vilamoura hotel, located on the east side of the quay. Offering superb fresh food and local cuisine, as well as such niceties as indoor and outdoor swimming pools and a spa in the most opulent and manicured of surroundings, many of the Tivola's hotel rooms also overlook the marina. The latter, therefore, can



Marina Taxi and boat delivery!

AN ECO-FRIENDLY MARINA

One of the greenest countries in Europe, Portugal has high aspirations for its eco-conscious citizens. The marina certainly takes its ecological credentials very seriously and operates under an internationally recognised Environment and Quality Management System, which aims to ensure that all activities and practices minimise the environmental impact. This isn't just limited to recycling – although the 'ecoponto' bins are certainly a feature of the marina – as any waste generated by maintenance and repair work in the yard is treated by licensed companies and the marina's water quality is monitored monthly by an accredited laboratory. Berth holders and visitors are actively encouraged to think about ways to contribute, and only biodegradable products can be used for washing down, while the use of antifouling paints with tributyltin (TBT) is prohibited.

Vilamoura, Quarteira, Portugal.
© Serhiy Stakhnyk - Shutterstock.

provide owners with a bird's-eye view of their boat.

Benefits and features

We found all the marina staff to be incredibly friendly and very helpful. Elisabete, a key member of the Vilamoura team, was keen to tell us about the new concierge service being offered by the marina. I recommend using this service, in fact, as there really is so much to experience in this beautiful location. The two beaches are owned by the same entity as the marina complex, with each beach displaying the same high degree of presentation, attention to detail and services as the other. With daybeds and parasols, wheelchair-accessible walkways, and beachside restaurants serving light lunches, sunset cocktails and fresh fish suppers, everything's comprehensively catered for in style. For the more adventurous, adrenaline-pumping parasailing trips, diving activities, and surfing

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Distances by road:

Santander to Vilamoura:
645 miles

Bilbao to Vilamoura:
665 miles. This equates to approximately 13 hours' travel time.

RIGHT: 1. Beachfront loungers.
2. Trawler docked in the historic harbor of Lagos

© PJ Photography - Shutterstock

CRUISING DESTINATIONS

Lagos

27 NM

It's a delight to meander along the coast here with its limestone sea stacks and network of caves and tunnels. You can anchor off the shoreline of Lagos Harbour or use the large Marina de Lagos to take advantage of its amenities. Once here, I recommend visiting the old town to wander around its cobbled streets and sun-soaked squares, all bound within the remains of Lagos's 16th-century walls.

© Sergei_Aleshin - iStockphoto

PASTELARIA
CULATRA

© Kq333-shutterstock

Culatra Island

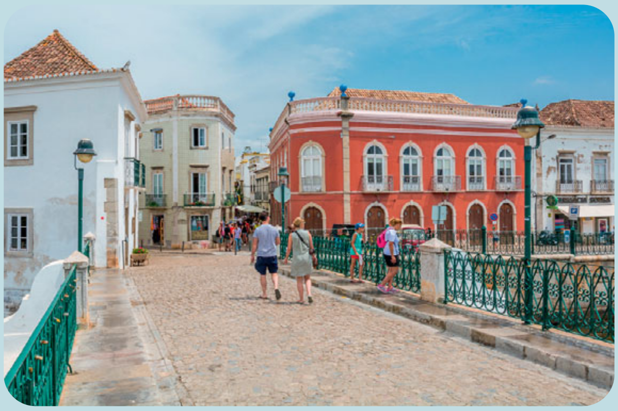
19 NM

You can anchor off the entrance to the channel leading to Faro and Olhão and then enjoy walking in this national park, which has no paved roads of any kind. The calm, crystal waters along Culatra's south coast are perfect for swimming, and the beautiful scenery and abundant wildlife are the main attractions here.

Tavira

30 NM

Lying on the Gilão River is one of the most charming towns in the Algarve. Tavira is a delightful mix of traditional Portuguese heritage and Moorish influences. Spring and autumn are the perfect times to visit as sunny weather dominates. Benefiting from few crowds, you are free to enjoy the local historical architecture, and once you have built up an appetite, the fresh sardines, served in the many family-run restaurants, are there to savour! Before anchoring within Tavira's shallow channels, take care to check your charts and pilotage guides carefully.



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Benagil cave

25 NM

Benagil is a small fishing village, and the local fishermen still use the beach to bring the catch of the day ashore. The main attraction here is the stunning Algar de Benagil cave, with its hole in the ceiling framing the blue sky above. You can walk around the cliff and look down into the cave, but the best way to visit is to use a paddleboard. This makes for a truly magical adventure.

VILAMOURA
ENVIRONMENTAL PARK

Established to ensure the conservation of valuable ecosystems, the park enjoys a wealth of wildlife and has two bird observatories, a circular trail and a visitor centre, which also carries out environmental research. With a diverse landscape of reed beds, farmlands and lakes, there are plentiful bird and flower species to spot, and even otters and striped-back tortoises. In autumn, the surrounding fields are frequented by migrating birds such as grey stonechats; then, during winter, you'll find white wagtails, tawny pipits and rare birds such as the purple heron. Typical trees of the Algarve region can be found all along the route and include carob, almond, olive and fig. The park's information panels highlight the vast flora and fauna to be seen.

TOP SIX REASONS TO WINTER YOUR BOAT IN THE ALGARVE

1: Accessibility: Brittany Ferries operate regular ferry crossings from the south coast of England to Santander or Bilbao on Spain's north coast. Enjoy the journey – it will take you two days, but I recommend a stop in the ancient city of Salamanca en route. It's a place famous for its wonderful ornate sandstone architecture.

2: Accommodation: If you need accommodation, there's a huge amount of choice at low-season prices. We loved the five-star Tivoli Marina Vilamoura located right on the quay, but just 1km from the marina, the Hilton Vilamoura is in a slightly more tranquil location and offers a shuttle bus to the marina, which boasts a superb slipway, great storage facilities and associated engineering services.

3: Flying made easy: Just 20 minutes' drive from the marina, Faro Airport offers excellent flight connections to all major UK airports, which means you can leave your boat and visit as often as you like. Ryanair, British Airways, easyJet and other smaller airlines all fly out of Faro.

4. Practicalities: With an average yearly temperature of 18°C and low rainfall, the climate is going to be kinder to your boat than a winter on the hard in the UK. With a wide slip to launch from, the storage facilities and associated services are fantastic, and you will also have peace of mind as the yard is surrounded by high walling and provides 24-hour security teams, CCTV and electronic access to the pontoons.

5. Berthing and savings: Berthing costs are so much cheaper in the Algarve. A berth in a premium Southampton marina for a 12m boat costs £7,862 for six months. A similar berth at Vilamoura Marina will cost 2,370 euros. At around a third of the cost of a UK berth, even when taking flights and accommodation into consideration, there are potentially some very real savings to be made.

6: Legalities: Under EU law, British-registered UK tax-paid boats can be kept in Europe for a period of 18 months.

THE MARINA QUAY IS A LIVELY MIX OF ENTICING SHOPS, ATTRACTIVE BARS AND CHIC RESTAURANTS THAT OVERLOOK A HARBOUR FILLED WITH A WONDERFUL ARRAY OF POWERBOATS

and fishing experiences can all be booked here too.

The marina quay is a lively mix of enticing shops, attractive bars and chic restaurants that overlook a harbour filled with a wonderful array of powerboats, the white hulls of which lie afloat, glistening in the sunshine. From the quayside here, you can also book wine-tasting and historical tours to nearby Loulé and Albufeira. There are no fewer than five renowned championship golf courses and world-class equestrian facilities nearby. A little under 30

BELOW: The Sunseeker dealership located on the quay.

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Bronze statue of helmsman celebrating Vilamoura's maritime heritage.

> THE TWO BEACHES ARE OWNED BY THE SAME ENTITY AS THE MARINA COMPLEX

minutes' walk from the town itself, you'll find a delightful nature trail. Beginning on the banks of the Ribeira de Quarteira, the route takes you on a restful ramble in search of orchards of carob, almond and fig trees.

Adventures abound

Families and couples alike can have so many wonderful land-based and seafaring adventures from this glamourous port. Heading west, the 6km-long Praia da Falésia stretches from Vilamoura almost all the way to Albufeira. It's regarded as one of the finest beaches in the Algarve, with golden sands backed by peach-coloured cliffs and accessible by boat from either end. Albufeira is the largest resort town in the Algarve, with cobbled streets leading up to the old town of whitewashed houses. However, it's best to avoid the newer part of Albufeira town if you wish to evade the lively nightlife!

A trip to the Benagil sea cave is a must-see and perfect for paddleboarders to access from the beach. Turning east from Vilamoura Marina, I recommend heading for Culatra Island with its anchorage located at the entrance to the channel leading to Faro and Olhão. Walking around the island is the best way to see the area and enjoy the slower pace of life here.

We found a fabulous family run restaurant serving fresh sardines

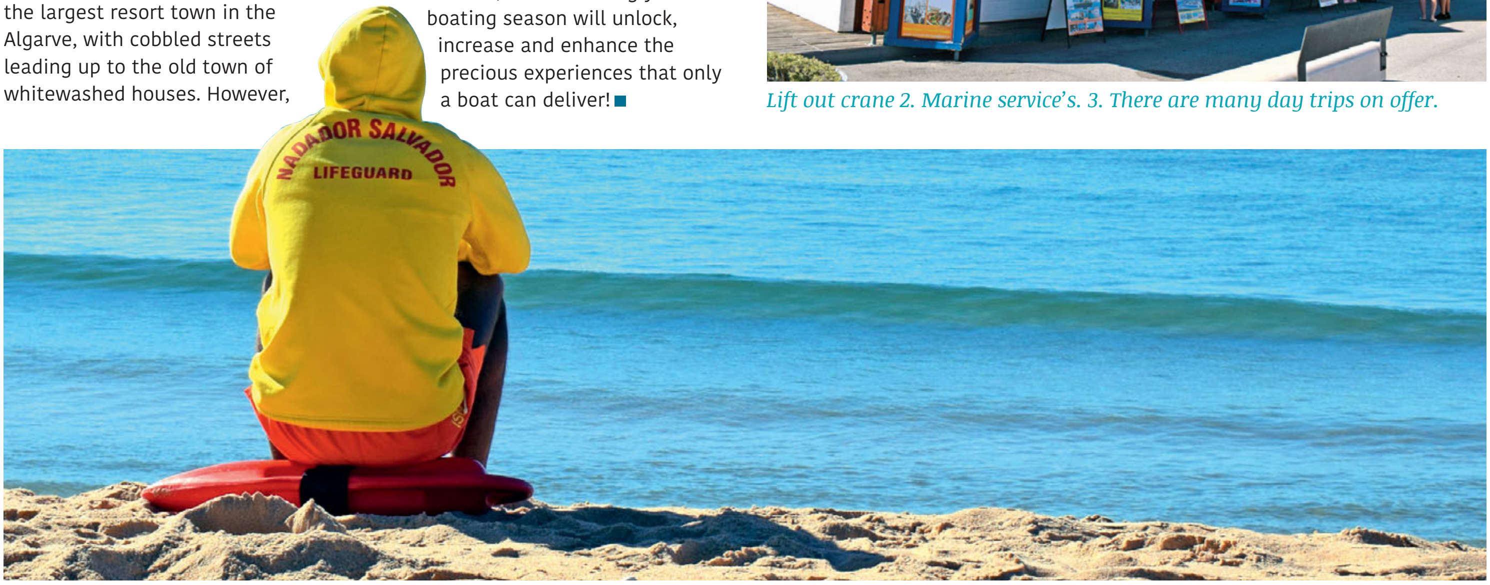
The verdict

So, is Vilamoura worth the ferry crossing and making the 800km road trip through Spain to Portugal? As we know, the good old British climate can be fickle and often conspire against us. But having the flexibility of being able to fly in and out to enjoy the 'shoulder months' in more temperate climes makes the likes of Vilamoura a very attractive prospect. The saving made on berthing fees and storage costs in Vilamoura could also offset the travel costs involved.

Our boats give us the opportunity to enjoy adventures and make memories, and extending your boating season will unlock, increase and enhance the precious experiences that only a boat can deliver! ■

Laoise T
YAMAHA

Lift out crane 2. Marine service's. 3. There are many day trips on offer.



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GALAXIA
ELECTRIC BOAT SHOW

Coming off the back of a successful inaugural show in Lagos, Galaxia Boats are back at Marina de Lagos, Portugal, for the second instalment of the Galaxia Boat Show this coming May. But it's clear that Galaxia's aspirations go far beyond just a show ...

With new areas full of the latest electric boats, technology and eMobility accessories from the best sustainable brands on the market, the Galaxia Boat Show, to be held from 12th to 14th May, looks set to be a great event to help kick off the European summer boating season.

Galaxia is bringing back three headline partners in a more impactful way in 2023, including X-Shore, who will be hosting the 'Electric Day Cruiser & Activity Zone', and Torqeedo, the market leader for electric mobility on the water, who will be joining as host to the new 'Sailing Village & Technical Zone'. Additional headline partnerships have been signed by Aqua superPower and BoatCenter, the latter being a national dealer of electric RAND boats and Greenline hybrid boats.

WHERE & WHEN?

► Galaxia 2023 takes place at Marina de Lagos, Portugal, between 12th and 14th May.

Galaxia is an event that sets out to champion the maritime electric revolution, utilising its manufacturer contacts globally to create awareness and inspiration within and around the e-marine industry. The 2023 boat show stands to be the largest and most focused collection of electric boats in Europe, with a forecast of 20,000 attendees. Encompassing a number of genres within the traditional boat show format, the event also fosters a festival environment, with live internationally renowned musical artists helping to create a vibrant atmosphere that celebrates the ocean, the boating lifestyle and the cleaner technologies seeking to make their mark in the new areas of sustainable technology.

eBrokerage (pre-launch)

Galaxia 2023 will not only showcase the latest in electric and sustainable craft but will also be active in the building of a digital marketplace to act as a brokerage and consultancy service to promote and develop sales opportunities, not only for boats within the sector, but also for shore-side repowering

YETI
YETI
X SHORE

infrastructures and equipment. The establishment of the digital marketplace will aim to streamline the processes involved in sales.

To further enhance the customer experience, Galaxia has partnered with BitPay to accept cryptocurrencies as a payment method, providing a convenient and tax-advantageous way for customers to spend their crypto holdings in a non-volatile process. Leading international brands are currently being onboarded onto the digital marketplace.

eMarina (pre-launch)

Galaxia E-Marinas are committed to building a future that is eco-responsible. The climate emergency we are witnessing affects the entire marine ecosystem, and both vessels and port infrastructure and facilities must evolve to address it. As marinas can be viewed as micro-cities that interact with onshore and sea environments, they play a key role in the future of civilisation. Innovation, ingenuity and collaboration are crucial as our world rapidly transitions to becoming sustainable.

With such in mind, Galaxia E-Marinas will be the first off-grid, exclusive eMarinas to design, innovate and build an ecosystem that utilises and invests in smart and sustainable modular solutions. With a central HQ and a network of global marinas under the Galaxia brand in partnership with local stakeholders, their goal is to fundamentally redesign the world around us. Building an ecosystem of disruptive marine tech businesses supporting start-ups and scaling with multiple ancillary revenue streams across retail, Galaxia's offering includes hospitality and technical centres too. ■

Contacts **Press: christina@galaxiaboats.com** **Operations: operations@galaxiaboats.com** **eBrokerage: brokerage@galaxiaboats.com**

ACES

X Marks the Spot

TMS travels to Florida to gain first-hand insight into the iconic site that is Lake X and its extraordinary history.

Among the many outstanding locations synonymous with the development and testing of the motor car, the Bonneville Salt Flats, Brands Hatch and Germany's Nürburgring are three of the best known. What, though, of the marine world?

While the likes of Coniston Water, Rouen and the Florida Keys are inextricably linked to some of powerboating's greatest racing and record-breaking achievements, is there any single location that could rightly claim to be a waterborne equivalent to the greats of the automotive world? Well, in fact there is: a place called Lake X.

Lake X could arguably be considered the greatest single location in terms of its influence upon the development of the outboard engine. The secrecy surrounding its location and the covert testing of engines undertaken here over the years has merely added to the intrigue and reputation of the place. So, what is its history, and what makes Lake X so special?

> THE SENSE OF HISTORY SYNONYMOUS WITH THIS LOCATION IS TANGIBLE.

As you may have read in Issue 180, PBR recently had the privilege of being invited by Mercury Marine to test the all-new V10 additions to their existing Verado range. Being the only UK media to receive the call, we of course leapt at the chance to fly out to Florida to join the global launch of these much-anticipated 5.7L 350hp and 400hp engines. But in addition to the time spent testing these motors on a multitude of transoms, we were also given a rare and exclusive tour of the Lake X site, and even free rein to power about its waters at will – something that few people outside Mercury Marine have ever been allowed, let alone invited, to do.

A sense of history

The sense of history synonymous with this location is tangible. For petrolheads and out-and-out lovers of all things outboard, Lake X is legendary. Its tree-fringed shores, like the stadia sides of a racetrack, help to guard its tantalisingly unruffled waters – as do the snake- and alligator-filled swamps that form the surrounding neighbourhood. The lake doesn't only speak 'speed' as it

Above: 1957 Lake X 50,000 Miles Run. Below: Lake X Dock View

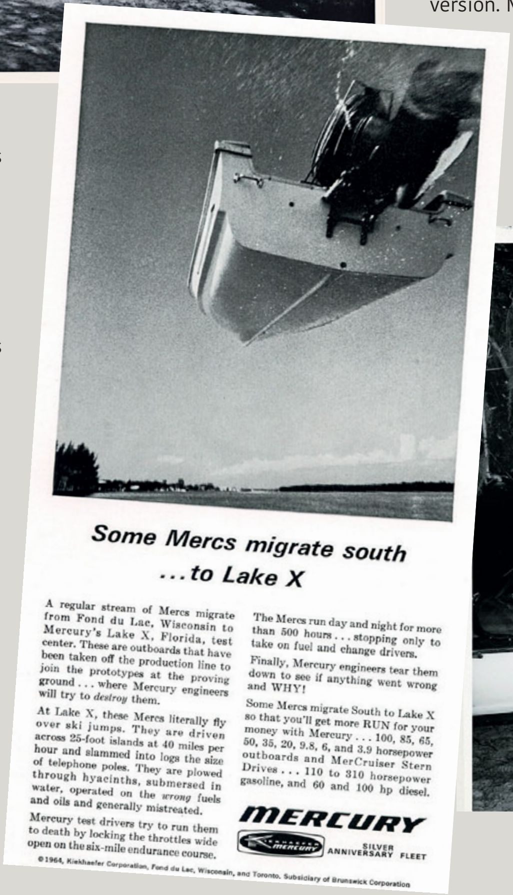
should be remembered that it was here, upon the brackish water of this very lake, that many of Mercury's most famous creations were trialled for the very first time. Engines like the classic 'Mark series', later versions of the famous 'Thunderbolt' and the industry trendsetter the 'Black Max' all cut their teeth on this Florida inland waterway. In addition, Lake X became a temporary home to race teams and boatbuilders from all over the United States seeking to improve the performance of their craft and related propulsion systems.

A pivotal year

It was in 1957 that the founder of Mercury, Elmer Carl Kiekhaefer, began testing his products at what was then the secret location he dubbed 'Lake X'. Later that year, the Kiekhaefer Mercury company designed a new inline 6-cylinder, 60 cu. in., 60hp (45kW) engine named 'Mark 75'. Like its 2- and 4-cylinder brethren, the Mark 75 featured internal reed valves. The reed valve blocks served as intermediate main bearings. Because the valves occupied space already necessary for the main bearings instead of mounting to an extension of the crankcase, the crankcase volume was minimised, resulting in a higher crankcase compression ratio, and more power in proportion to displacement than the competition.

> FOR PETROLHEADS AND OUT-AND-OUT LOVERS OF ALL THINGS OUTBOARD, LAKE X IS LEGENDARY.

Mercury's first 6-cylinder engines featured 'direct reversing'. Instead of a lower unit with forward, neutral and reverse gears, its lower units were more compact, with only drive and driven gears, and no submerged shift mechanism was required. Reverse was selected by turning off the engine and restarting it in opposite rotation, and neutral by simply switching off. Mark 75s, like many of their smaller cousins, were available in an 'H' (high-speed) version. Many of these large 'H'



Some Mercs migrate south

...to Lake X

A regular stream of Mercs migrate from Fond du Lac, Wisconsin to Mercury's Lake X, Florida, test center. These are outboards that have been taken off the production line to join the prototypes at the proving ground ... where Mercury engineers will try to *destroy* them.

At Lake X, these Mercs literally fly over ski jumps. They are driven across 25-foot islands at 40 miles per hour and slammed into logs the size of telephone poles. They are plowed through hyacinths, submersed in water, operated on the *wrong* fuels and oils and generally mistreated.

Mercury test drivers try to run them to death by locking the throttles wide open on the six-mile endurance course.

The Mercs run day and night for more than 500 hours ... stopping only to take on fuel and change drivers.

Finally, Mercury engineers tear them down to see if anything went wrong and WHY!

Some Mercs migrate South to Lake X so that you'll get more RUN for your money with Mercury ... 100, 85, 65, 50, 35, 20, 9.8, 6, and 3.9 horsepower outboards and MerCruiser Stern Drives ... 110 to 310 horsepower gasoline, and 60 and 100 hp diesel.

MERCURY

KIEKHAEFER MERCURY SILVER ANNIVERSARY FLEET

©1964, Kiekhaefer Corporation, Fond du Lac, Wisconsin, and Toronto. Subsidiary of Brunswick Corporation

Left: 1964 Lake X advert. Below: 1957 Mark 75 Lake X team

KIEKHAEFER CORP
MERCURY OUTBOARD MOTORS

THE MAN BEHIND THE NAME

Elmer Carl Kiekhaefer was a uniquely successful individual. He was born in 1906 in Mequon, Wisconsin, graduated from Cedarburg High School, attended the Milwaukee School of Engineering for one year, took extension courses in electrical engineering from the University of Wisconsin, was hired in 1927 by Evinrude Motors, was soon fired by Evinrude for alleged 'frequent, disquieting and brazenly insubordinate arguments concerning design and product development', received 200 patents, won 52 NASCAR races that resulted in championship wins in 1955 and 1956, and founded Kiekhaefer Marine – the company that would become Mercury Marine.

Additionally, Kiekhaefer was extremely innovative. The Kiekhaefer Corporation manufactured small 'drone' motors for 'target aircraft' and developed two-man chainsaws for the US military during World War II. Just as Kiekhaefer set standards in outboard manufacturing and performance, he also introduced the concept of 'professional teams' to auto racing.

Kiekhaefer died in 1983 and is buried in St Charles Cemetery, Fond du Lac.

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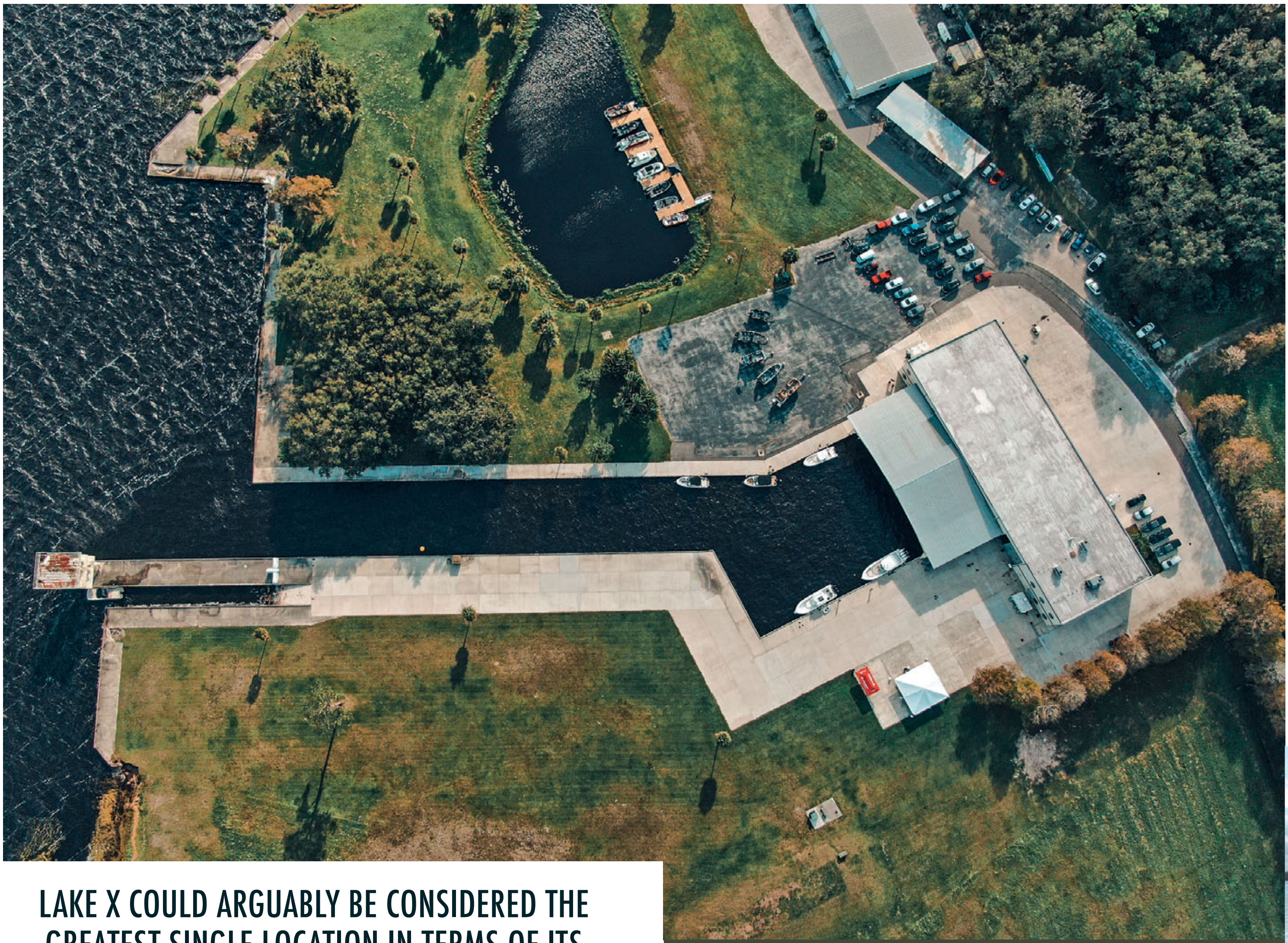

LAKE X COULD ARGUABLY BE CONSIDERED THE GREATEST SINGLE LOCATION IN TERMS OF ITS INFLUENCE UPON THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE OUTBOARD ENGINE.

engines sported open headers for competition and produced 90hp from 60 cu. in. Two totally stock Mark 75s set a world endurance record on Lake X, running 50,000 miles at an average of 30.3mph, while being refuelled on the fly. The boats were stopped only for driver changes and standard maintenance. After the record-setting run was completed, the motors were torn down and inspected for wear. Even so, despite their gruelling experience on Lake X, their function was still found to be well within factory tolerances.

Further advances

In 1958, an enlarged version of this engine was introduced. The new 'Mark 78' had 70hp with 66 cu. in. of displacement. No 'H' version was offered. Also in 1958, a stock Mark 75H set a new world speed record

ABORDO
DANGER
ALLIGATORS AND SNAKES IN AREA
STAY AWAY FROM THE WATER
DO NOT FEED THE WILDLIFE

THE FAMED LOCATION

In 1957, Mercury Marine founder Carl Kiekhaefer bought a 1,440-acre body of water that he named 'Lake X'. It was perfect for covert testing – close enough to his Orlando headquarters to be convenient, but far enough away to ensure that nobody outside the company would end up there by mistake.

In 1984, Mercury sold the property to the Kirchman Foundation, a non-profit conservation group, ostensibly because Mercury's racing programme outgrew the confines of the 3-mile lake. Now, Mercury is back at the compound, leasing the property from Kirchman to test production engines. Three miles worth of water is still plenty, it would appear, as long as you keep your speed to around 100mph or so!

The lake is surrounded by 10,000 acres of forest and swamp. There's a guard at a gatehouse, the sole access point, located at the terminus of a dead-end road. But in addition to the latter, site security is further strengthened by an army of alligators, some of whom occasionally wander out of the lake to lounge in the sun. The original boathouse and shoreline observation tower are still standing, their stark metal structures being dominated by large, convex round windows, designed to evoke the appearance of a boat's portholes. Once neglected for decades, the buildings have an eerie abandoned-compound feel about them. The rusted observation tower looks as though it's been created for the stage set of a post-war spy thriller.

for outboard motors of 107mph, which, by anyone's standards, was absolutely remarkable for the time.

When Kiekhaefer Mercury's top-of-the-line 80hp (74 cu. in.) model, the Merc 800, was introduced to the market in 1960, direct reversing as standard equipment was optionally replaced by full forward, neutral and reverse gear shifting, as on Mercury's 2- and 4-cylinder models. These outboards also featured 'thru-hub' exhaust technology. Prior to this, as with other outboard brands and Mercury's smaller models, exhaust fumes exited from a chute at the rear of the cavitation plate above the propeller. But a 'thru-hub' exhaust design benefited from being more efficient by omitting the added drag of an exhaust chute, while at the same time utilising the low-pressure area created by the gear housing and propeller to assist with exhaust evacuation. Over the next several years, 'thru-hub' exhaust became a standard feature of all Mercury models, and it was later adopted nearly industry-wide for both outboards and sterndrives.

In 1961, the company merged with the Brunswick Corporation. That same year, the company introduced the MerCruiser sterndrive line at the Chicago Boat Show. The line would later take over 80% of the world market. The following year, the inline 6 Merc 1000 became the new flagship of the series, offering a full 100hp. It was a sensation and gave way to the launch of the 'Phantom Black' paint livery, which in turn was adopted by the entire model range. The swinging sixties continued with the emergence of Mercury's 6-cylinder models employing the benefits of electronic ignition. This was another first that became an industry standard.

As I said, the waters of Lake X saw pretty much all of Mercury Marine's formative journey. To not only stand upon its shores but actually take to its 1,400 acres of water was, as you can imagine, an unforgettable experience – one that I shall remember always as being a highlight of my boating career thus far. PBR

OPERATION ATLAS

Arguably the most legendary project held at Lake X was 'Operation Atlas'. To disprove any criticism levelled at his products over their longevity or mechanical prowess, in 1957, Kiekhaefer conceived a non-stop 'around the world' endurance run employing a pair of boats powered by Mercury Mark 75 outboards. After a staggering 34 days, 11 hours, 47 minutes and 5.4 seconds, the lead boat completed its 4,526th lap of Lake X, having covered a total distance of 25,003 miles! It was followed only minutes later by the second boat, ever enshrining Operation Atlas as the most extraordinary and testing mechanical endurance procedure ever staged in maritime history.

LUND
LUND
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MERCURY
MERCURY
400
V10

THE GREAT WHITE DEBACLE

PBR's marine biologist, Giovanna Fasanelli, provides a fascinating insight into the global comings and goings of great white sharks, revealing where their existence is being threatened and why our oceans so need this prehistoric predator.

Meeting of majesty

Cape Town, my home, was once touted as the 'great white shark capital of the world'. My first outing to observe these compelling predators, back in the winter of 2008, was an unforgettable day. We motored out from Simonstown Harbour pre-dawn to the waters surrounding Seal Island, guided by passionate conservationists and the founders of Apex Shark Expeditions, Chris and Monique Fallows. Chris brought the unique 'flying sharks' of False Bay to the world's attention after first observing their aerial antics from a kayak in 1996. He has subsequently captured some of the world's most publicised images of breaching white sharks, while becoming a formidable and unstoppable advocate for the species' preservation. We were in superior hands!

'Seals! 12 o'clock! Don't look away!' Monique exclaimed. Then, as if an underwater bomb had gone off, the silky sea exploded, lifting out what appeared to be a 4-metre marble sculpture of a deep-sea leviathan, its mercury-coloured body glistening in the golden dawn light, its jaws empty and wildly clenched as it narrowly missed the tail flipper of a young seal. By lunchtime we had witnessed over a dozen of these epic breaches, some completely clear of the water, as different sharks attempted to capture frightened fur seals swimming at the surface. These precious few hours remain arguably the most riveting wildlife watching of my life.

THE HOPE OF THE GREAT WHITE'S STORY PERSISTING THROUGH HUMAN DOMINION HANGS ON TENTERHOOKS ...

Photo: © Below-Surface

My memories, however, now carry a solemn sting as I consider the world merely 15 years later: these beasts are all but gone from the waters of False Bay for reasons that are hotly contested. Despite their fame, these predatory giants remain largely an enigma, and yet, lamentably, their fate appears to lie in our hands.

Gatherings of the great ocean nomads

The white shark (Carcharodon carcharias) is a temperate cosmopolitan species tolerating waters between 5 and 24 degrees centigrade, roaming far, wide and deep (even down to lightless realms at 1200 metres), and capable of extraordinary migrations, sometimes across entire ocean basins. Shark scientists have, however, isolated six genetically distinct population 'hot spots' around the globe: the North-West Atlantic, the North-East Pacific, the Mediterranean, Australia/New Zealand, South Africa and the North-West Pacific.

© *Andrea Izzotti*

© Shane Myers

AS BATTERY TECHNOLOGY IMPROVES, SATELLITE POP-UP TAGS CAN NOW DELIVER DATA POINTS OVER MULTIPLE YEARS

But ask the experts how many white sharks are alive today and the answers are vexatiously vague and wide-ranging. However, more important than knowing how many we have left is what trends are showing up in the relative-abundance data. Are our recovery methods proving effective or not? Through satellite and acoustic tagging projects and the collection of genetic material, biologists have managed to shine some light onto the species' black hole of data deficiency. Of particular conservation interest has been establishing the location of mating, pupping and nursery grounds, areas that are utterly crucial for the recovery and persistence of local populations (and hence the species as a whole). The young sharks, which are born at lengths of around 1.4 metres, need prey-rich, protected areas to safeguard them from larger predators. Biologists have been working hard to identify these critical areas:

1. **North-East Pacific:** Point Conception to San Diego (California) and along the Baja Californian coast, including Sebastián Vizcaíno Bay (Mexico).
2. **North-West Atlantic:** Near Montauk, Long Island (New York/New Jersey Bight).
3. **Australia** (two subpopulations have been identified): Eastern – Port Stephens (New South Wales) and Ninety-Mile Beach (Eastern Victoria); Western – suspected around Recherche Archipelago (Western Australia); New Zealand: suspected nursery areas around the top half of North Island.
4. **South Africa:** Algoa Bay (Eastern Cape).
5. **Mediterranean:** Sicilian Channel and the Aegean Sea.
6. **North-West Pacific** (Japan and surrounds): Data deficient.

As battery technology improves, satellite pop-up tags can now deliver data points over multiple years, which has allowed researchers to understand a great deal more about the reproductive biology and motivations of adult sharks over the course of their lives. Thanks to a 2013 study by Michael Domeier, President of the Marine Conservation Science Institute, we now have a clearer picture of the two-year breeding cycle patterns of adult females as they move from their mating grounds off Guadalupe Island to pupping grounds off Baja California, Mexico, and back to Guadalupe to mate again. This information highlights the anthropogenic risks that pregnant sharks are exposed to as they approach their coastal pupping sites – risks that then extend to their offspring, which will spend the first few years of their lives in these inshore areas. Encounters with shipping traffic, overfished and polluted waters and, most worryingly, subsistence and commercial fishing activities are significant threats, especially to the young sharks. Careful stakeholder

Sicilian west coast

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management of these sensitive breeding areas is crucial to the species' survival.

SCAN ME
Nursery map for NE Pacific population

Goodbye to Cape Town

So where are the majestic sharks that put False Bay on the world map? The rapid decline in sightings in the bay began in 2017 when the annual average dropped from 205 to 50. It then fell to zero in 2019. It took 20 months before a single white shark was seen in the bay again. A very popular theory in play is that a sudden increase in attacks by new resident orca (two in particular named Port and Starboard, as their respective dorsal fins droop left and right) has frightened the sharks into moving further to the east to areas off Mossel Bay, where sightings are still reliable. But Chris Fallows of Apex Shark Expeditions points us to the illegal and rampant fishing of small shark species such as school and gummy sharks, which supply 60% of the white's local diet. The meat of these small sharks is sold to Australia as 'flake' for the fish and chip market.

Another concerning factor not to be ignored is that the local population estimate for South African breeding sharks is now believed to be approximately 300 individuals, 200 shy of what is estimated as being sufficient to keep the population genetically viable. Death by beach safety nets and commercial fishing continues to chip away at the population every year, which points to a very uncertain future for South Africa's white sharks. Will these majestic hunters return to False Bay? Tour operators, who have had to radically adapt their businesses to stay alive in the wake of this shock wave, can only hope so, but no one is holding their breath any longer.

ABOVE: 12 Apostles Cape Town SA
© HMS.

INSET: Great White Shark Breach, False Bay, SA
© Giovanna Fasanelli

© iStockphoto

RIGHT:

1. *Provincetown, Massachusetts, Cape Cod city.* © *Lagunatic Photo.*

2. *Grey seals on Monomoy National Wildlife Refuge, Cape Cod USA.* © *John J King*

WATER TEMPERATURES AND THE ABUNDANCE OF SEALS OFF UK COASTLINES SEEM TO BE IN ALIGNMENT WITH CONDITIONS THAT WHITE SHARKS ENJOY IN OTHER PARTS OF THEIR GLOBAL RANGE.

Hello to Cape Cod: a shining example

While False Bay's shark tourism takes a nosedive, enthusiasts are, ironically, flocking to the scene of the Jaws movie set, Cape Cod. Dr Greg Skomal, a senior biologist with the Division of Marine Fisheries in the USA and the state of Massachusetts' pre-eminent shark expert, has been studying the resurgence of white sharks on the Massachusetts coastline at Cape Cod over the previous decade. 'It's a combination of factors. With prohibition on retention implemented in 1997, the white shark population in the western North Atlantic appears to be rebounding after years of overexploitation in the 1970s and 80s,' said Skomal. 'Seal populations are also coming back with the implementation of the Marine Mammal Protection Act in 1972. The growing presence of grey seals in coastal areas is also drawing the sharks closer to shore.'

Fortunately, public opinion about the great whites' 'homecoming' is, on the whole, accepting, with careful and considered awareness campaigns having taken priority from the beginning, headed by groups such as the Atlantic White Shark Conservancy. 'Most people are reasonable and understand that the presence of white sharks off Cape Cod represents the restoration of a natural ecosystem,' commented Skomal.

And climate change?

With all these dramatic changes to the South African and North-West Atlantic white shark populations already afoot, what else can we expect of these enigmatic beasts as climate change effects are felt around the oceans? Warmer waters are undoubtedly going to create significant shifts in most marine food webs as temperature plays such an important role in their mechanics and in the physiology of most marine animals. Already notable is the burgeoning population of juvenile white sharks preferring the waters of Monterey Bay, California. 'We started seeing the heatwave after 2014, and that warmer water temperature along the coast opened up a swim corridor over 400 miles from Santa Barbara all the way up to Monterey Bay,' said Monterey Bay Aquarium Director, John O'Sullivan. 'It was one of the aquarium's first examples of how climate change affected the marine animal.'

Water temperatures and the abundance of seals off UK coastlines seem to be in alignment with conditions that white sharks enjoy in other parts of their global range. So why, then, do we not see a thriving community of these predators here? First of all, from where would these sharks be swimming? It is possible, but very unlikely, that they would be coming all the way from their North-West Atlantic range: according to tagging studies done by scientific organisations such as OCEARCH, white sharks tend to stay their respective sides of the Mid-Atlantic ridge, with only two famous tagged females, Lydia and Nukumi, having crossed the divide from west to east. This means that the most likely sharks to swim north will do so from the Mediterranean.

There is little doubt that this near-landlocked sea once supported a glut of large ocean predators that thrived on the bounty of tuna and other game fishes. Indeed, a white shark population of unknown size (but worryingly low genetic viability) is understood to be clinging to existence, bearing offspring in

Main image: Researchers follow 16 ft WS Cape Cod USA © Wayne Davis
Top: Dr Greg Skomal tagging WS Cape Cod USA © Pam King. Above: White shark feeds on whale carcass Cape Cod USA © Pam King.

what's left of the rich tuna fishing grounds of the Strait of Sicily. But with a 2018 State of World Fisheries and Aquaculture (SOFIA) report commissioned by the United Nations identifying the Mediterranean as the world's most human-depleted sea (62% of fish stocks are categorised as overfished), it begs the question as to how such large predators are managing to 'earn a living' with what prey is left, while themselves avoiding injury and death by capture. Ironically, this bodes well for worried water users who may be wondering if warming waters will see great whites frequenting the UK. Some marine scientists maintain that the numbers of Mediterranean white sharks are so limited that the chances of encountering them in UK waters are pretty low, but anecdotal reports that contest this continue to grow. Richard Peirce, former chairman of the UK's Shark Trust, has investigated nearly 100 claimed sightings of great white sharks around the British Isles and found that this number can be whittled down to just seven possible sightings. Peirce remains convinced that the odd vagrant is possible, but without a single confirmed sighting, swimmers should keep their bathers on and

> WATERS OFF THE UK ARE SIMILAR TO THOSE FOUND OFF CAPE COD, WITH LOWS OF 5°C AND HIGHS OF 20°C

CAGES AND SHARKS

A convenient way for shark scientists to gain access to shark data is to team up with tourism operators that are with the predators on a routine basis at the best-known aggregation sites: the USA's Farallon Islands, Mexico's Guadalupe Island, Australia's Neptune Islands, New Zealand's Foveaux Strait and the southern tip of South Africa where boats operate into either False Bay, Gansbaai or Mossel Bay. Responsible cage diving is a non-consumptive utilisation of white sharks bringing incredible economic and scientific gains, as well as keeping poachers and illegal fishing vessels away from protected areas where sharks are vulnerable. Concerns that cage diving with white sharks conditions the animals to humans and boats, thereby increasing the risks to nearby swimming communities, have been addressed in several studies, with no links yet validated. Studies conducted in Australia's Neptune Islands have, however, found some impacts on the sharks in terms of their energy budget (they used more energy when around cage diving operations), and some changes in swimming behaviours were observed. But if we were to ask the sharks whether they would prefer to live with cages or hooks, it's certain that they would forgo being part of a global shark fishery for which the total annual landed revenue stands at US$630 million, and declining, due to overfishing. Incidentally, the global shark diving tourism industry has recently been valued at US$314 million, and is likely to double within 15 years. Shark tourism, when done correctly, appears to help much more than harm.

FURTHER INFO

Excellent write-up about the validity of white shark sightings in UK waters: https://www.wildlifeonline.me.uk/articles/view/great-white-shark-in-british-waters.

Richard Peirce on great white sightings in UK waters: http://www.peirceshark.com/great-whites-in-british-waters.

Follow OSEARCH's shark tracks: https://www.ocearch.org/tracker.

unknotted! As the food supply in the Mediterranean dwindles, and as waters begin to heat up around the UK, this would appear to appeal to the white's preference for temperatures between 12°C and 24°C, but with seemingly very low numbers of these animals within swimmable distance, it is unlikely that there will be an invasion! Bear in mind that even in regions where these predators are thriving, one is twice as likely to die in a vending machine accident, or to be bitten by another human being, as to be attacked by a white shark. Statistics matter!

Final thoughts

The hope of the great white's story persisting through human dominion hangs on tenterhooks, along with that of a further one-third of its shark and ray relatives. While some populations of these apex predators appear to be on the rise, some are in disturbing decline, and there are some about which we know next to nothing, let alone how climate change will affect them. Tallying the numbers is futile. My personal hope for this species? While we get better at enforcing the protection laws for both them and their prey, collaborating across the species' full global range, improving our data collection methods and reducing sharks' accidental capture, these great hunters will learn ways to survive our ruthless reign. Sharks have overcome five mass extinction events during their estimated 420 million-year tenure, but none as daunting as their current challenge: surviving the age of man …

SLOW BREEDERS

Great whites are slow breeders producing on average between two and 12 (and up to 17) pups per litter after a gestation period of approximately 18 months.

Females only begin breeding around 15 years (4.5–5 metres) and males around 10 years (3.5–4 metres).

They give birth to live young that are left to fend for themselves.

Infographic on shark tourism value:
https://marviva.net/wp-content/uploads/2021/10/A2-Economic-value-of-sharks.pdf

Interested in meeting a great white in the flesh?
https://xplorio.com/gansbaai/en/about/infographic/great-white-shark-hotspots/

Tagged shark South Australia © Andrew Fox

ASK THE EXPERT

PHOTOGRAPHY BY RNLI – NIGEL MILLARD ©

BETTER OUT THAN IN

In this special PBR feature, HMS looks at the matter of 'man overboard' from a different perspective and gain the expert contribution of one of the RNLI's senior trainers.

Taking emergency action and undertaking a successful search for a person who has fallen overboard is not a random process. On the contrary, it largely works to a formula of tried-and-trusted methods and protocols. Why so? Because the sea is neither a benign nor a static environment; it embodies forces that are constantly on the move. It also has the ability to summon a plethora of evils that often conspire to literally hide, or at least obscure, a casualty from even the keenest observer. And if that wasn't enough, if you are unfortunate enough to become its victim, the sea's temperature alone is sufficient to kill you. If you doubt this bleak appraisal of our fickle friend and how challenging it may be to locate an MOB casualty, then consider the following. One day you might need to call upon this knowledge.

Hide and seek

First off, let's take the matter of light refraction. This phenomenon can mask the observer's view of the water's surface. The lower the object or subject is within the water, and the lower to the water's surface the observer's line of sight is, the greater the effect light refraction will have, especially when looking into the sun. Shimmering light on the water's surface can be 'blinding', although this effect can be lessened hugely, or almost entirely filtered out, by the wearing of Polaroid sunglasses.

> If you enjoy offshore adventuring, particularly aboard an open craft such as a RIB, then consider your attire in line with both the prevailing conditions and how far offshore you'll be at any given time.

Fewer than a handful of men have ever been recorded as having actually walked on water. The apostle Peter tried it, of course, and for various reasons ended up getting very wet! But when a casualty enters the water, even when wearing a life jacket, they emerge with just their head showing and/or perhaps just a slither of their body on view above the water's surface. By its nature, the sea obscures or hides approximately 90% of any body mass entering it.

Besides failing light, weather conditions such as haze, fog and precipitation reduce the likelihood of a successful sighting hugely. Weather conditions can, of course, change at sea almost without warning too. Visibility issues caused by the natural elements likely represent the greatest set of challenges to anyone involved in a search-and-rescue scenario.

If the foregoing wasn't bad enough, unlike the static nature of the land's surface, the sea is complicated by waves! These do not have to be very large before they exceed the height of a casualty in the water. But if they are substantial in size, it could even reach the point where the casualty is being obscured completely for many seconds at a time. Add in the additional issue of flying spray in conditions typically exceeding force 7 in strength and you can well imagine how difficult a man overboard search truly becomes. In many instances, but only if the conditions allow for it, only a helicopter or a drone may have any realistic likelihood of sighting a casualty in the water. Whenever the

Crew onboard the Hoylake Shannon class lifeboat Edmund Hawthorn Micklewood 13-06 during a man overboard (MOB) training exercise at sea.

© RNLI:Nigel Millard

Visibility issues caused by the natural elements likely represent the greatest set of challenges to anyone involved in a search-and-rescue scenario.

circumstances allow, it stands to reason that the higher the vantage point, the less such things as light refraction and waves have the ability to obscure a person in the water. It makes good sense to carry a pair of binoculars on board your boat, not merely for nature watching, etc. but also to call upon in the event of requiring aid for the sighting of an MOB casualty. As not all MOBs take place in daylight, some form of powerful searchlight, even if this equates to a good-quality hand torch, should also be carried as part of your essential offshore kit.

What we haven't mentioned, of course, is the not inconsequential matter of tides. We covered this subject in some detail within Issue 180, but in no small measure, the ability for the sea to move the casualty away from his/her original entry/MOB point is, in every sense, an example of the sea playing to its own set of rules. If the tide is running at 1.5 knots, for instance, that clearly means a casualty will be carried away by the tide to a distance of almost 2 miles in just 60 minutes. In other words, there is no time to lose in an MOB rescue scenario. Quite literally, every minute counts. That said, because the tide's direction and rate is something that can usually be determined and calculated quite accurately, it can also be an ally in determining a casualty's position. But this 'advantage' requires accurate tidal prediction and an expert ability to process and use this information to the rescuer's advantage. Besides which, tides are a complex phenomenon, and when their movement is affected by the variances of the coastline and its geological features, exactly where a tidal current might take a casualty will likely boil down to the application of intimate local knowledge. The lifeboatmen of old were absolute experts in this respect.

PREVENTION BETTER THAN CURE

The very best MOB scenario is to avoid it altogether! But accidents happen, and by its nature, the sea is an environment that heightens the risk of accidents occurring. So, what precautions can you take? Here's a brief list of some of the things we all need to keep in mind.

▶ 1. Whenever aboard a vessel, particularly one that's fast-moving, think before you move. Use grab holds and keep your CoG low, especially on a wet deck, by keeping your knees a little bent.

▶ 2. If you're out in rough conditions, watch out for any item that may inadvertently strike you in the face, e.g. a seat back, the edge of the cabin roof, a bulkhead face, etc.

▶ 3. As a skipper, ALWAYS wear your kill cord when underway.

▶ 4. Be mindful too, as skipper, of those passengers positioned not directly in your line of sight. We are not suggesting that your private vessel should be fitted out this way, but commercial 'Sea Safari'-styled operators tend to have their passenger seats located ahead of the helm station. This is to enable them to observe any potential issues instantaneously.

▶ 5. Wear the correct life jacket. This means an auto-inflate on all open craft and a manual inflate when on passage aboard a cabin craft in adverse weather. You can imagine, too, how valuable a light on your life jacket would be to those trying to find you in failing light or in the dark. Offshore yachtsmen's jackets will often have this additional feature fitted as standard, and it doesn't take much imagination to appreciate why.

▶ 6. PLBs have proved their life-saving capabilities time and again in recent years. These personal electronic devices are kept on one's person and, as in the case of Ocean Safety's latest product, are even designed to be attached to a life jacket. Just think how grateful, how relieved you would be if, upon unexpectedly becoming an MOB casualty, you could call upon the assistance of such a device. The few hundred pounds you'd expended on purchasing a GPS-enabled PLB would instantly feel like the best investment you'd ever made!

▶ 7. If you enjoy offshore adventuring, particularly aboard an open craft such as a RIB, then consider your attire in line with both

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CIG81015	4.5 x 3 x 2.4m	£309.00	£370.80
CIG81216	4.9 x 3.7 x 2.5m	£359.00	£430.80
CIG81020	6.1 x 3 x 2.4m	£389.00	£466.80
CIG81220	6.1 x 3.7 x 2.5m	£429.00	£514.80
CIG81224	7.3 x 3.7 x 2.5m	£539.00	£646.80
CIG1432‡	9.7x4.3x3.65m	£1099.00	£1318.80
CIG1640#	12x4.9x4.3m	£2998.00	£3597.60

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the prevailing conditions and how far offshore you'll be at any given time. If you want to be kept safe in all situations, regardless of weather and sea state, there really is only one option: a full drysuit. I speak from experience. It doesn't matter how technically advanced any expensive foul-weather garment may be, no clothing of this type will save your life if you go into the water. If you boat offshore in an open craft or regularly undertake extended coastal voyages, there is no alternative to a good-quality, fully immersion-proof drysuit. It's an item of clothing that will potentially buy you hours of life if you find yourself in an MOB situation.

▶ 8. Personal mini-flare packs tended to be carried by offshore adventurers, particularly before PLBs came to the fore. They may not be so readily carried these days in the pocket of a drysuit or sailing jacket, but they still have their place and have proved their worth countless times, both in the professional and offshore arenas. Their advantage is that they are inexpensive, but unlike a PLB or EPRIB, remember, flares of any description will only be effective in conditions where they can be seen.

▶ 9. A waterproof/water-resistant hand-held VHF, such as those produced by the radio manufacturer Icom, is immensely compact and rugged and is designed to attach to one's person, usually the life jacket. Being able to call for assistance and then direct your rescuers to you gives you, without doubt, the most incredible advantage. If you haven't already done so, why not think of investing in such an item with a view to keeping it attached to your life jacket?

> The initial actions and the ability to keep calm under pressure play a big part in a successful outcome...

Crew onboard the Llandudno Shannon class lifeboat William F Yates 13-18 © RNLI / Nigel Millard

Crew onboard the Swanage Shannon class lifeboat George Thomas Lacy 13-13. Simulated rescue of a fisherman from the sea.

© RNLI / Nigel Millard

© RNLI

EXPERT WITNESS: SEARCH-AND-RESCUE TECHNIQUES

But now onto the matter of our expert witness, and to help us in this respect, we've invited Adrian Bannister, one of the RNLI's chief lifeboat crew trainers, to enlighten us as to the professional's approach to MOB search and rescue. This reveals the techniques and methods employed by the RNLI, one of the most experienced and highly recognised life-saving operations in the world. Here, then, are Adrian's top life-saving search-and-rescue recommendations.

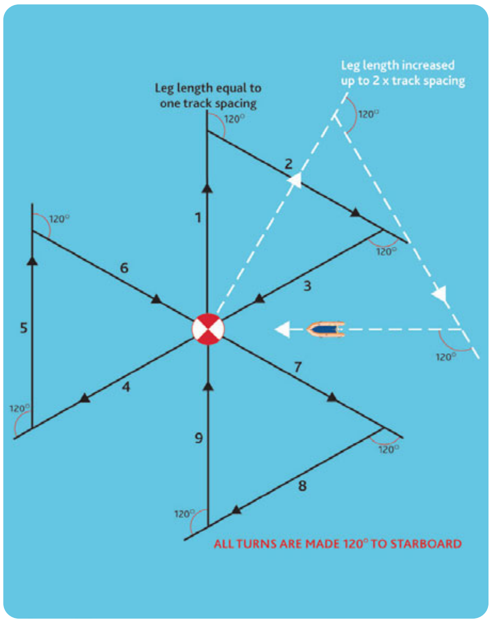
▶ 1. The initial actions and the ability to keep calm under pressure play a big part in a successful outcome during an emergency. Aim to stabilise the situation; communicate using mini-briefs and closed-loop communication with the crew, repeating all verbal commands and actions throughout the task. In the event of a person overboard, advise crew and reduce speed. Point at, while keeping your eyes on, the position, and immediately mark it using a GPS waypoint, alongside a time.

▶ 2. If you have a person overboard, raise the alarm straight away by using any available means. If you recover the person from the water, the lifeboats can always be stood down, but they would prefer to be en route. Use your VHF DSC radio, if fitted, to send out a distress alert. It only takes five or six seconds and could save a life. Follow up your distress alert with a Mayday call on Channel 16. If there is one transmission you want your crew to be confident sending it's the Mayday call.

▶ 3.If the person overboard is out of sight, after noting the position and time and sending your distress alert and Mayday call, it's time to search. Prepare the boat and brief the crew. In darkness or restricted visibility and a flat sea, if safe to do so, I may turn the engine off and listen for shouting. Use torches and assign crewmembers a side to watch, be it port or starboard, looking out to the sides.

▶ 4. My initial intention is to run on a reciprocal course back down my track at a reduced speed. You could return back along your boat's wash having looked at the ship's compass for a reciprocal heading. In restricted visibility, you may need to use the breadcrumb trail/track on a chartplotter. If minimal time has elapsed, even when travelling at planing speed, the MOB is unlikely to be far along your track.

▶ 5. When arriving at the scene shortly after the incident, an RNLI helm or coxswain will opt to execute a datum/water-based search such as a sector search. They will deploy a hi-vis floating datum with a light at night and a coiled line or bucket attached to prevent it being blown away and use this as a reference point to return to each time. A sector search consists of 18 legs, with all course changes to starboard at 120 degrees. (See Sector Search graphic below)


Leg length equal to one track spacing
Leg length increased up to 2 x track spacing
120°
120°
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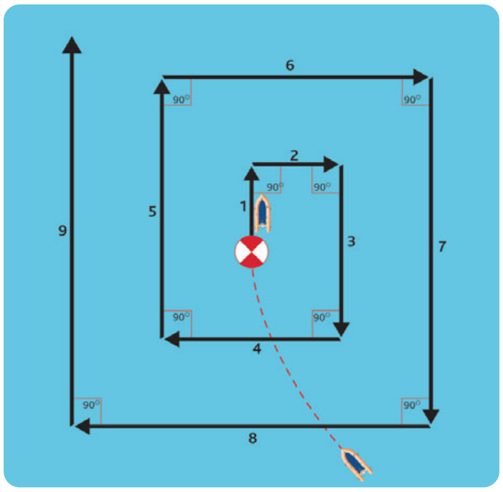
1
2
3
4
5
6
7
8
9
ALL TURNS ARE MADE 120° TO STARBOARD

▶ 6. I would suggest you keep things simple by prepping an expanding square search for those not familiar with a sector search: select a comfortable, safe speed for the conditions (not so fast that you might miss seeing the person). All speeds are to be through the water using a Log or engine RPM. Once the speed is set, the throttles should not be adjusted at all, even for the turns, unless for the safety of the boat. Use a magnetic ship's compass and the cardinal points N, E, S and W for your course; this will allow you to drift with the tide at the same rate as your person in the water. The legs will increase every other leg.



EXPANDING SQUARE EXAMPLE:

Leg 1: North 30 seconds
Leg 2: East 30 seconds
Leg 3: South 60 seconds
Leg 4: West 60 seconds
Leg 5: North 1 min 30 seconds
Leg 6: East 1 min 30 seconds
Leg 7: South 2 mins

Once the lifeboat is on scene, they will contact you via VHF and commence a search. At night, if the helicopter is not in the area, the lifeboat may position upwind and deploy white parachute rockets in order to illuminate a large area. Avoid looking at the rockets to maintain night vision; focus on the illuminated water. If you are able to assist the lifeboats in the search, they will then pass on further information.

ADRIAN BANNISTER

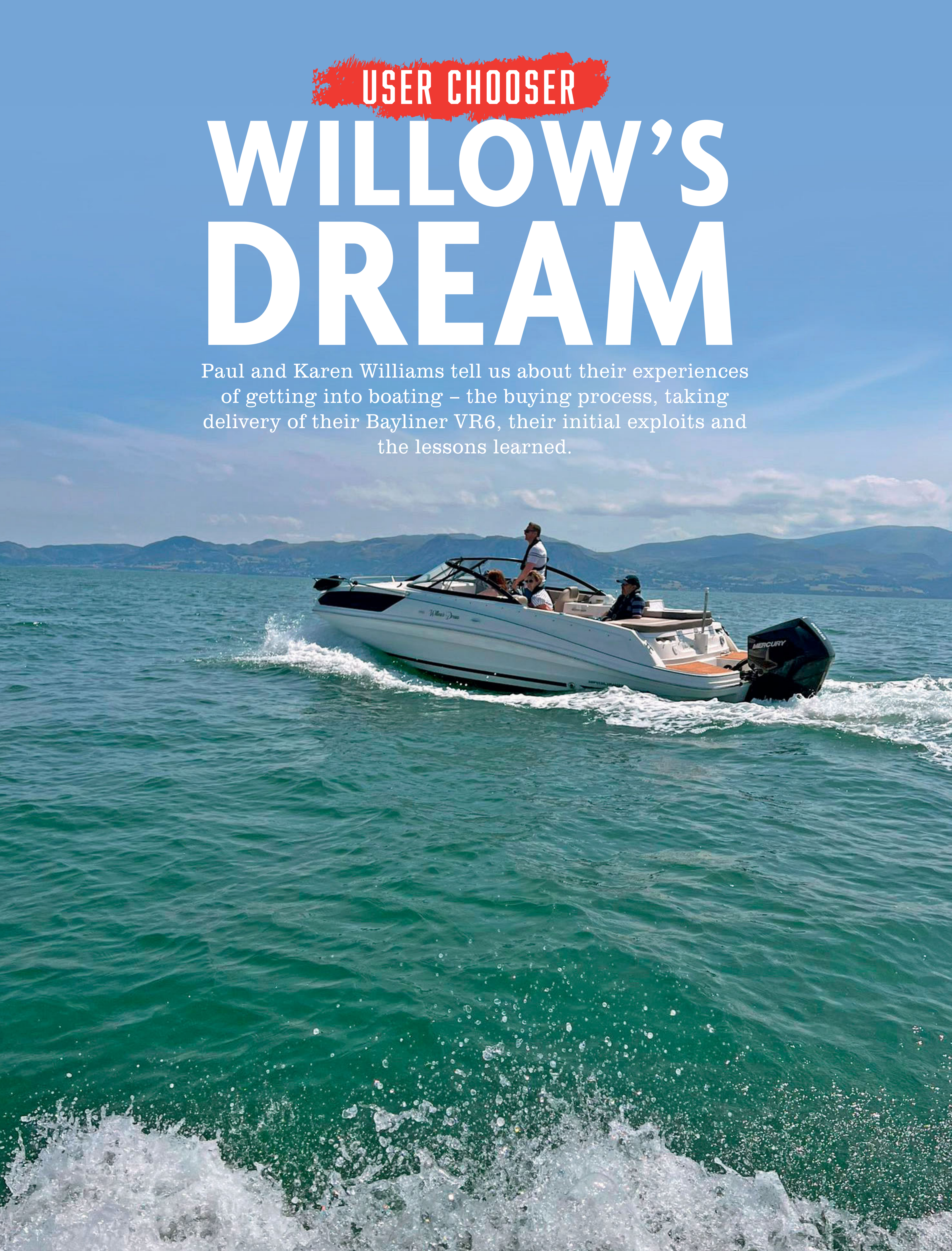
Adrian Bannister: lifeboat crew trainer Having grown up around water, sailing, canoeing, kayaking and powerboating in the Sea Cadets and Scouts, Adrian focused his efforts on making a career out of training. Before working at the RNLI, he taught a large number of RYA courses for all levels up to Instructor and Yachtmaster level. He's now spent the last six years training RNLI lifeboat crews on both the Institute's inshore and all-weather lifeboats.

For further information on how to call for help visit: https://rnli.org/safety/how-to-call-for-help-at-sea.

USER CHOOSER

WILLOW'S DREAM

Paul and Karen Williams tell us about their experiences of getting into boating – the buying process, taking delivery of their Bayliner VR6, their initial exploits and the lessons learned.



Paul and Willow's Dream

I (Paul) have always had an interest in, and passion for, boating. Being on and around water makes me feel relaxed and allows me to switch off from whatever else is happening in the world. I can't book a holiday anywhere without including some sort of boat hire or trip, so Karen hasn't had much choice other than to develop a love for it too. I just never considered the possibility of actually owning a boat until the lockdowns in 2020/21 gave us too much time to think and work things out. When we considered the possibility of actually buying a boat, we took a drive up to Windermere to see what they had available – only to discover that getting a berth in the marina was going to be very unlikely. However, the salesperson we spoke to told us he was attending the Southampton Boat Show the following month, so we looked into that and decided to have a weekend at Southampton to look at options there.

While we were at the boat show, it was Karen who first laid eyes on the Bayliner VR6 that we eventually went on to purchase. We did have slightly different ideas of what we wanted initially, but after spending the day looking around, we both agreed that the Bayliner had everything we were searching for. We were both going into this with a view to leisure use, therefore a 'day boat' was fine for what we wanted. We did some research and understood that this Bayliner was considered an entry-level boat, which was fine as that's exactly where we were.

The boat

The one thing that was important to Karen was finding an open-top boat with room to lounge around, especially during the summer months. The VR6 caters for this nicely with its L-shaped cockpit seating and additional sun pads for the bow. We both wanted a cuddy cabin and a head because, even though we intended to use it as a day boat, we did want the option of staying overnight at the marina.

FROM INITIALLY LOOKING AT PUTTING A BOAT ON A LAKE TO WHERE WE ARE NOW, IT HAS BEEN A VERY ENJOYABLE JOURNEY.

I was looking at the more practical features, so important to me were the 225hp Mercury engine, bow thruster, full canvas pack, electric windlass and Mercury VesselView. With being so new to boating, I wanted to ensure we had equipment that would make this as easy as possible.

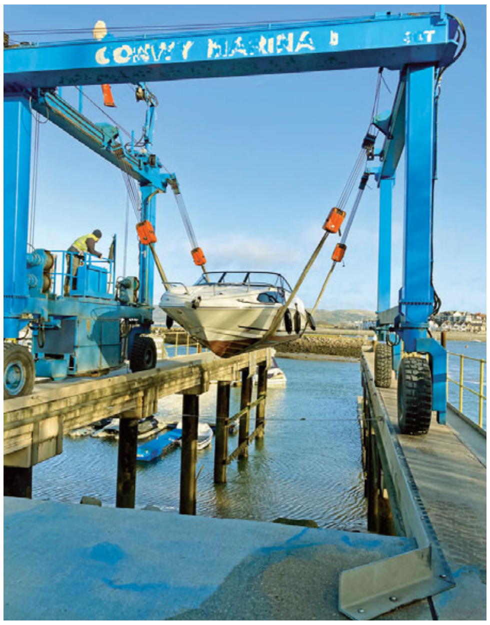
Because we purchased the boat from the boat show as a demo model, it was fully loaded with extras, so we both got everything we thought would be important.

Location

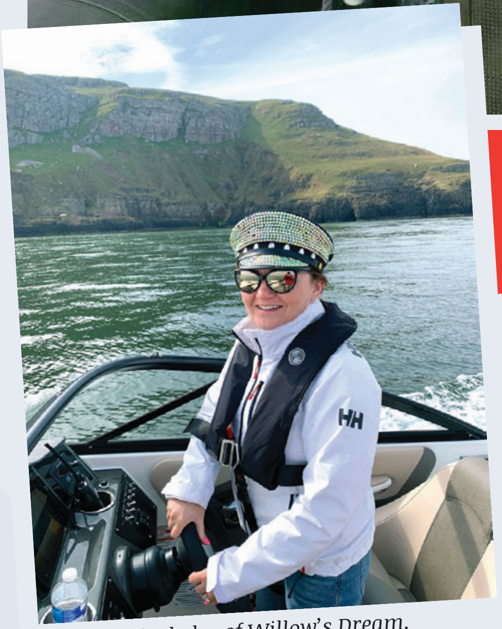
Once we had secured the boat, we then had to work out where we would put it. Initially the idea was to have it on Windermere, but as that wasn't possible, we had to look at other options. We didn't want anything more than a two-hour drive because we really wanted the opportunity to wake up on a nice day and decide spontaneously to have a day on the boat. From Liverpool, the best option was to head south to the beautiful North Wales coast. Conwy was an attractive destination because it is around an hour and a half's drive, but equally as important is its gorgeous landscape. One of the attractions of Windermere was the walks around the Lake District, but Conwy is surrounded by the Snowdonia mountain range and ticks the box of other activities we were hoping to enjoy around our boating adventures. We took a look around Conwy Marina and instantly loved it. Once again, we were told that berthing spaces were very limited, but fortunately, they managed to fit a boat of our size in. So, we had the boat and we had the location, but the change from a lake to a coastal area brought with it another challenge. We quickly realised that this changed our outlook dramatically with having to learn all about the tide, weather, VHF radio, sill gates and much more!

Preparation

After more research, this time into powerboating and coastal boating, it was apparent that our best option was to start with a Powerboat Level 2 course. We had arranged for the boat to be delivered in the middle of February 2022 before the season got going so we could get out while it was quiet (without making too much of a fool of ourselves). We booked the course in November


1. The new Bayliner VR6 in its glory. 2. On the lift at Conwy Marina.

Training day!



Karen at the helm of Willow's Dream.

WE DON'T HAVE ANY REGRETS SO FAR AND HOPE TO CONTINUE OUR JOURNEY INTO FUTURE YEARS.

WE HAVE LEARNED A LOT, MADE NEW FRIENDS AND REALLY LOOKED FORWARD TO OUR BOATING WEEKENDS.

2021 and that's when it felt like our adventure had really begun. We had a weekend of cold but lovely weather for that time of year. The training was done on the Menai Straits, and we seemed to take to both the practical and theory elements of the course. We both really enjoyed it, and it reassured us that we had made the right decision to blindly get ourselves into the boating world. What we didn't realise until later was that it actually would have served us better if the weather conditions had not been so perfect!

After we had completed the RYA Powerboat Level 2 course, we then moved on to route planning and ensuring we had all the required equipment before the boat was launched. We planned our routes in the traditional way with chartplotters and had around five prepared. We probably went more into this than necessary given the type of boat we had and the areas we would be travelling to, but better safe than sorry. We also checked that we had all the necessary gear, including life vests, fenders, ropes, knife, boathook, VHF radio (and course), etc. The list was much longer than we had anticipated, but again, as part of our boat purchase a lot of the essentials were included.

We also had to decide on a name and went with Willow's Dream. With Willow being what I often get called (short for Williams) and the boat being my dream, this seemed a fitting name.

Maiden voyage

The boat was delivered and launched on a lovely but crisp February morning. The guys from Bates Wharf filled it up with unleaded and put it in its berth for us. We were stricken with nerves but decided to take it out for a short time just on the River Conwy to give us a feel for it. Getting off the dock for the first time was fine, and we made it out of the marina and through the first few buoys of the Conwy channel before realising we had no life vests or kill cord on! I think we were just overwhelmed with excitement and nerves, so all of our most basic training went out of our heads. Once we had composed ourselves, we decided to head back to attempt our first docking! I think this was the thing I was dreading most, but by taking it very slowly we managed to get back into our berth without any incidents or drama. We decided to come back the following weekend and take Willow's Dream out for a proper maiden voyage.

So the time had come for our first real adventure! We had recruited Karen's brother to come along with us in case we needed an extra hand, and the three of us set out on course for Puffin Island. This is a place we went to during our training and we couldn't wait to go back there. Once again, we left the berth without too much of an issue, although straight away I could feel the difference in the wind and did have to work harder not to drift too close to the nearby boats. The wind on this day didn't look too bad, but this was down to my inexperience, and I hadn't looked at the proper information to see what gusts to expect, which were more like a force 4–5.

Getting out to Puffin Island was cold but the sea conditions were manageable. We got to the north point of Puffin Island, where we could see the seals as well as puffins in large numbers. It

Sightseeing Conwy Castle

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FEATURES

Bayliner VR6 Cuddy

Year: 2022

Length overall: 22ft 4in

Beam: **8ft**

Engine: Mercury V6 225 XL unleaded (196L fuel capacity)

- Digital dash with VesselView 9in upgrade
- Electric windlass
- Bow thruster
- Full canvas pack

Being new to boating, anything to aid us on the water was a welcome addition. The Mercury engine is a definite highlight with its low noise level and enough power for some sporting use on the River Conwy. The bow thruster was also something important to us as beginners. This has been used less and less as we have gained more experience, but the feature was well utilised in our early days and is always at hand to bail us out of trouble if we find ourselves drifting in the marina. The full canvas pack has been an important feature for us as we like to spend time on the boat when docked at the marina – this keeps us dry and warm in the unpredictable UK weather. It has also been used by a couple of guests as overnight accommodation with the seating layout changed to the sun pad configuration.

was fantastic. But I did notice a massive change in the sea conditions at that point, so we headed around Puffin Island to come back to the marina. That's when we faced our first realisation of how seriously one should take the weather and sea conditions! It quickly became apparent that we had been travelling with the wind on the way out, but were against the wind coming back in. The waves were smashing straight over the front of the boat, soaking all three of us, which, mixed with the cold conditions, made for a very uncomfortable and scary journey back. Karen and her brother clung on with their heads down while I motored us back towards the marina, catching every wave with my face. I really feared for us going back because we hadn't experienced this in any of our training (not their fault, the weather was ideal), so we were massively unprepared. It had become 'Willow's Nightmare'. About halfway back, I saw three dolphins jumping in and out of the waves, which did give us a bit of joy in the madness. Karen and her brother managed to lift their heads just enough to see them but still didn't speak during the sighting.

When we eventually got back to the buoyed channel, the conditions started to calm down, so we felt more relaxed, until we realised we had to dock the boat in a wind that we hadn't experienced before. Once again taking it very slowly, I thought I had mastered it with Karen ready with the ropes, but the bow took a swing just as we were about to land. Karen's brother took the brave decision to jump off (I think by this point he just couldn't wait to get off!) and he managed to pull us in.

This experience definitely taught us to respect the elements. It had actually started to put doubts in my mind about how much use we would get out of Willow's Dream if conditions weren't great. Fortunately, that was the only bad experience we have had, and since we learned the hard way what people kept telling us, we have never made the same mistake again. Respect the conditions ...

The summer

We went out as much as we could before the summer months and really started to feel comfortable with the boat. However, when we did get to summer, that's when boating became the real pleasure we thought it would be. It genuinely

Paul at the helm, mindful of the speed limit brought us closer to family, friends and nature. We hardly had a weekend without somebody visiting, which was really nice. We have seen dolphins again (when we could enjoy them), plenty of seals and birds, and the views just don't seem to get any less exciting. We did over 40 hours on the engine, but we had plenty of time anchored up and at the marina too. Our friends and family have brought their kids, who have had a magical experience, and we have enjoyed some 'adult' days with a few drinks involved (once safely back at the marina for the captain). We have been out in the day mostly, but also at sunset, which can be breathtaking. Lockdowns and travel restrictions did help us to appreciate what we have on our doorstep, and although we will still travel to take in other cultures and experiences, this has given us a great break from the working week. We are already looking forward to next summer and will definitely take some time off work to extend our weekend visits.

Reflection

From initially looking at putting a boat on a lake to where we are now, it has been a very enjoyable journey. We have learned a lot, made new friends and really looked forward to our boating weekends. We don't have any regrets so far and hope to continue our journey into future years. The Bayliner VR6 has provided us with everything we needed for beginners. I think we have been lucky so far and we have yet to do any real maintenance, so I am sure we have more testing times to come, but we will be ready for them.

The proud master!

Future plans

We are already thinking about an upgrade. We would like to get more adventurous and travel further out with probable overnight stays. Karen still loves having the open boat, so we will try to stick with a similar style but with a more practical cabin and facilities and a second engine. Other than that, we would stick with all the upgrades we have on Willow's Dream. ■

ABOUT PAUL AND KAREN

Paul and Karen are both from Liverpool, have been married for eight years and work full-time. Both jobs are full on Monday to Friday, so boating has become a great hobby to give them a break from working life at weekends and refresh themselves for the week ahead. Paul works in sales, with his main interest outside of work being football, and he is a keen Liverpool fan. Karen has her own bookkeeping company, and outside of work she enjoys reading and travelling. They have similar goals in life in that they both want to work hard in order to play hard! They have a strong work ethic, which enables them to enjoy their other interests, especially in these difficult times. They appreciate any little luxury they have as if it could be gone tomorrow, because you never know what is around the corner.

TOTALLY WIRED

FULL REWIRING ACCOUNT & 'HOW TO'

JONATHAN PEERS

Armed with little more than a soldering iron and a crimper, Jonathan Peers, PBR's RIB junky, takes his ageing Tornado RIB, Northwind Challenger, firmly in hand to provide her with a full wiring upgrade.

Over a year had passed since my trusty old Tornado RIB, Northwind Challenger, had undergone her major rebuild. But when it comes to boat ownership, we all know that the work is never truly done. With her new deck and transom in place, Northwind Challenger felt like she'd been reborn, ready for many more seasons to come. Notwithstanding, to my dismay, electrical problems started to become apparent. These was nothing too major, but where there are one or two issues, invariably there are more waiting in the wings.

The effects of saltwater corrosion are well known, and what started life as just a couple of dodgy spade connections on the switch panel and some temperamental instrument lighting soon led to me discovering a large voltage drop in the cable that leads to the rear navigation frame. Little wonder the boat was suffering from dimming lights and air horns that had given up the honk!

Forcing my hand

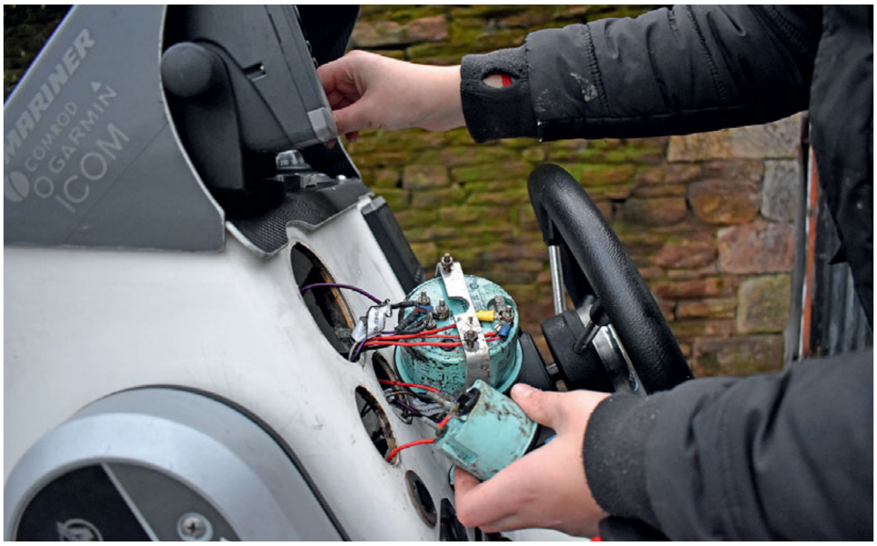
When I bought the boat as a project over a decade ago, I gave myself just one month to swap the engine and carry out the numerous modifications, including the fitting of a new console and rear jockey pod. I often chuckle to myself when I think back to that time I packed my wife, Kelly, and our young son (as he was then!), Tom, off to our caravan in Anglesey for the weekend. With them out of the way, the dining table was duly pushed up against the wall before a brand-new, sparkling white helm console became the new focal point of the dining room! Armed with a hole saw, a soldering iron and a small quantity of beer, that particular weekend saw me setting about re-rigging my electronics, sometimes into the early hours. Looking back, it's a miracle any of it worked at all, let alone last as long as it did!

My self-imposed tight schedule demanded that I employ whatever I had at my disposal in order to get the job done before the family returned. All the same, I paid close attention to all my connections, carefully soldering as I went, though I admit to the hardware being an assortment of automotive wire and household flex. Of course, I hear you muttering about just how DIY this all sounds, but the sea was calling, and I was aching to get afloat!

The rigging was really quite basic, but to my credit, upon completion, it actually looked reasonably neat and tidy. But as time passed, more items were added, and as a consequence, I had to modify the wiring accordingly. The trouble was, by the time I'd added a full NMEA 2000 network, my once tidy wiring resembled Spaghetti Junction! Not only does messy wiring look

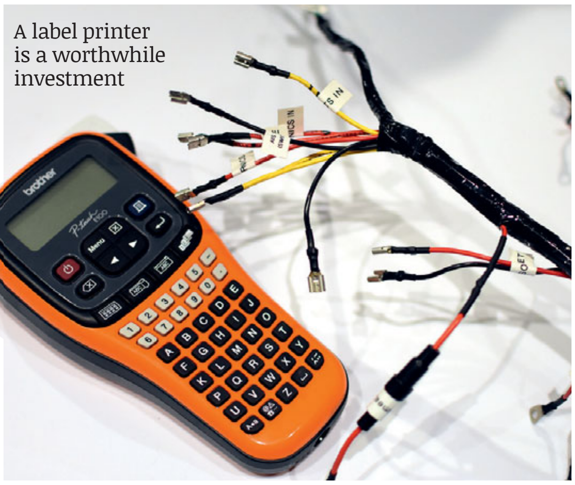
WIRING METHOD

Each cable was made up in the same manner: first, by taking the free end from the roll, then stripping back 10mm or so of the insulation, before cutting 25mm of heat shrink tubing and sliding it down the cable far enough not to be affected by heat from the solder iron. Using a pair of ratchet-style crimping pliers, I then securely installed a terminal onto the cable end. A good-sized soldering iron (I used a micro blowtorch) was used to heat up the terminal and feed in solder, while allowing it to flow around the exposed cores and fill any voids. (This method provides a strong, permanent electrical and mechanical bond, while also ruling out the possibility of moisture being able to enter the connection.) Once cool, I slid the heat shrink tubing over the crimped part of the terminal, before heating the tubing up to make it shrink tightly. (This insulates the exposed metal of the terminal, reducing the risk of short circuits, and also gives the wiring a professional look.) NB: Great care must be taken while soldering to protect oneself against burns, and also to avoid breathing in the fumes given off.



Top: Northwind Challenger. Bottom: Dismantling the gauges.

I STARTED OUT BY BUILDING A VERY BASIC, THOUGH DIMENSIONALLY CORRECT, MOCK-UP OF THE RIB'S CONSOLE OUT OF SCRAP PLYWOOD.



A label printer is a worthwhile investment

WINTER CAN PROVIDE A GREAT WINDOW OF OPPORTUNITY FOR REPAIRS & UPGRADE PROJECTS

unsightly, but it makes fault finding incredibly difficult. Something had to be done. The problems now surfacing were forcing my hand. It was time to sort this matter out and undertake a full rewire …

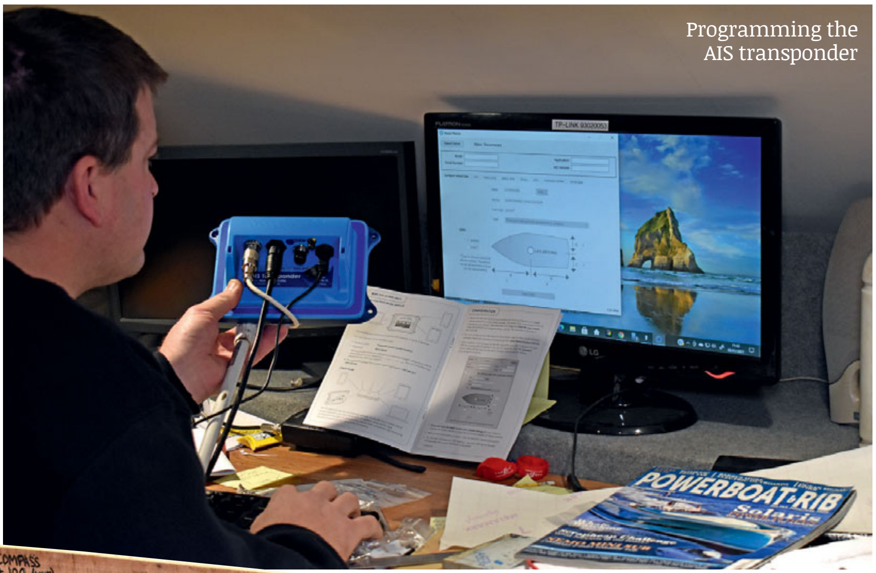
Knock up the mock-up

Winter can provide a great window of opportunity for boat repairs and upgrade projects, and that's all to the good if they can be undertaken in well-heated, comfortable surroundings. In terms of the latter, my office was set to be the perfect workspace. My aim from the start was to produce a bespoke wiring loom very much of the type one might find behind the dashboard of a car. But to achieve this, I would need to determine the exact length of each wire and its precise route. This is no easy task when working within the confines of a boat console or locker.

I started out by building a very basic, though dimensionally correct, mock-up of the RIB's console out of scrap plywood. Having carefully recorded all the necessary measurements, I plotted the positions of the various electrical items on the main console, which included the plotter, radio, switches and gauges, along with the compass, the latter requiring a 12V feed for its illumination.

Previously, all the circuits were protected by fuses, either within the switch panel or by means of inline fuses to the individual components. My upgrade saw these replaced with a purpose-made fuse box, which I fitted to the side panel of my mock-up.

Knowing that I'd want to be able to cable-tie the wiring loom high up inside the console out of harm's way, I made a simple frame out of threaded bar, onto which I could lay up each wire, replicating the route the loom would take.



Programming the AIS transponder

Using the mock-up unit not only meant I had unhindered access, but once completed, I only had to brave the great outdoors for the briefest period necessary in order to install the loom and make the final connections!

My materials inventory was actually quite basic: a bag each of uninsulated ring and spade terminals, solder, heat shrink tubing and special 'looming' tape. The wiring itself was to be 1.5mm tinned marine cable. Although this cable can be purchased by the metre, I opted for full rolls – five, in fact.

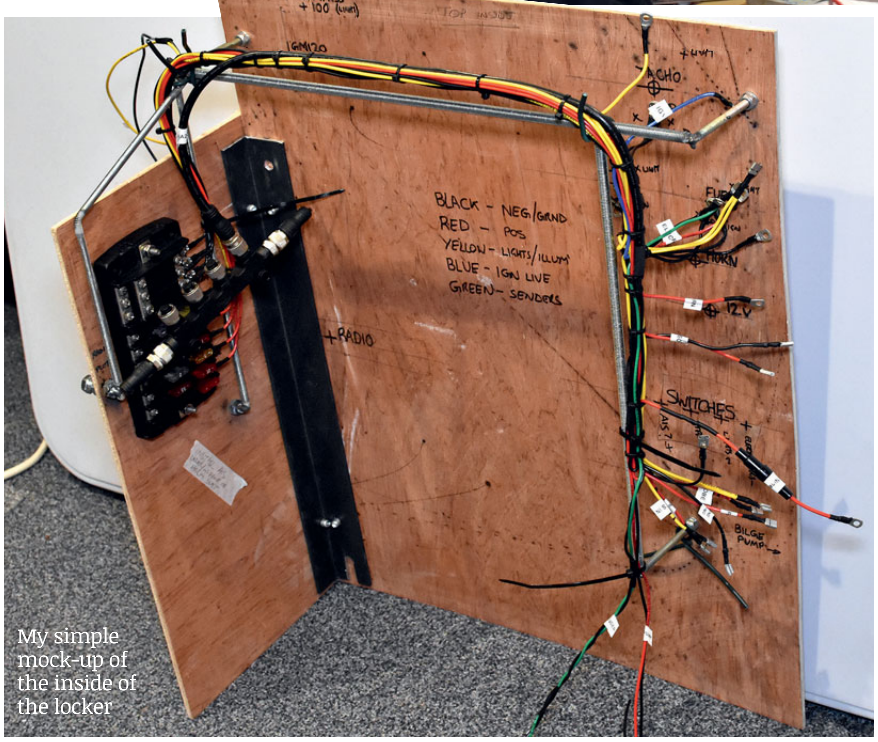
For simplicity, I set out my own colour coding. Naturally black would be ground or negative, and red battery positive. Blue, I decided, would be ignition live, picked up from the engine remote wiring. I felt yellow was the obvious choice for the lighting circuit, which left green cable for any signal or sender wires for the gauges.

When it comes to terminals, there seems to be much debate as to whether soldering or crimping is the best method. Personally, I believe that soldering is by far the most reliable approach. Having said that, I'm a belt-and-braces kind of guy, so I did both!

Wiring and admiring

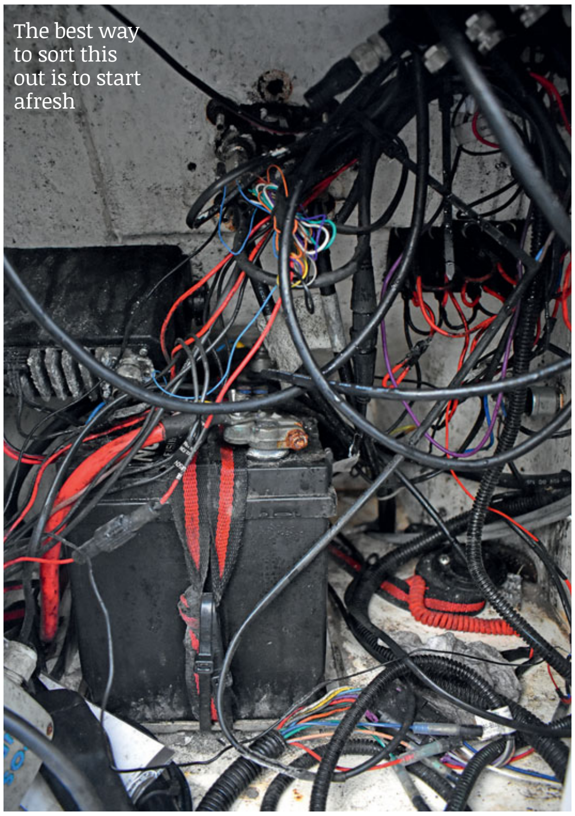
The RIB's fuse box is a simple enough affair. It connects directly to the battery and distributes power to a number of screw terminals via individual fuses that protect each circuit. This is the source of power for all of the electrical items that require a permanent live feed, as opposed to those items that only operate when the engine's ignition system is turned on. The fuse box also features a number of screw terminals that simply connect to the battery's negative side.

With the fuse box fitted to the inside of my mocked-up console locker, each cable, once fitted with a terminal, could be physically screwed into the box before being routed around the metal frame to its intended switch or gauge. The cable could then be cut at just the right length before having the appropriate terminal again crimped and soldered on.



My simple mock-up of the inside of the locker

Neat and reliable. Crimped, soldered, and finished with heat shrink tubing.



The best way to sort this out is to start afresh

AUTOMATIC IDENTIFICATION SYSTEM

An Automatic Identification System (AIS) is an automated tracking system that displays other vessels in the vicinity and in turn broadcasts your own identity (MMSI number), position, heading and speed to other vessels. This information is commonly overlaid onto the chartplotter display. The transponder itself operates in the marine VHF band and as such requires its own dedicated aerial or a special splitter allowing the unit to share the existing VHF radio aerial.

The law states that all vessels over 300gt operating international routes, including all passenger ships, must be fitted with an AIS. These vessels operate the more sophisticated Class A transponders. Leisure craft, and anyone else who chooses to install an AIS voluntarily, will use Class B transponders. These are less expensive to purchase and can be installed hidden from view. They provide a similar function, albeit in a basic form. Tracking is not continuous; instead, the unit ‘pings’ every 30 seconds, broadcasting your new speed and position.

There is provision for a switch to be wired to the transponder that stops your details being transmitted – in effect, making your vessel invisible should you not wish the world to know your whereabouts. This feature allows you to still receive other vessels’ signals to be displayed on your plotter screen. It’s worth noting that while other vessels see your AIS signal in real time, websites such as Marinetraffic.com rely on land-based stations to receive the signals before uploading the data to the Internet. This causes time delays and gaps in coverage in certain areas.

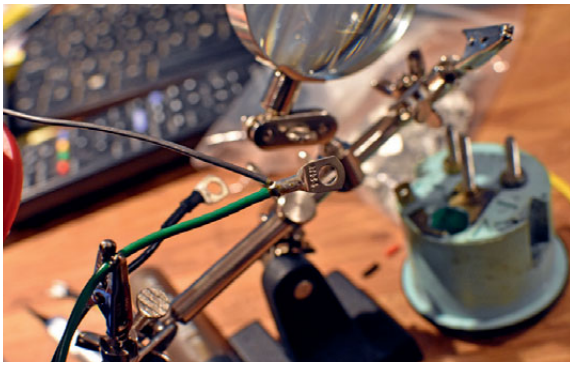
> FOR SIMPLICITY, I SET OUT MY OWN COLOUR CODING.

Repeating this process over and over again may seem laborious, but with it comes a huge sense of satisfaction, knowing that each cable treated this way will be one less potential issue.

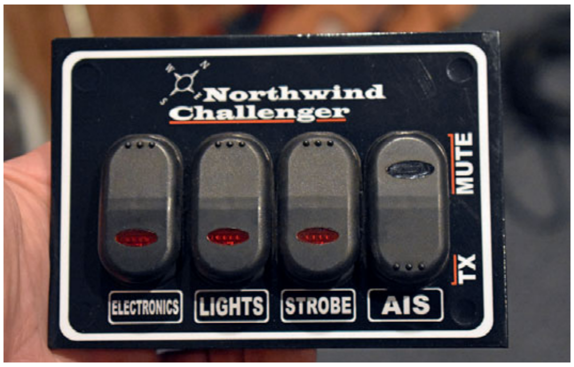
Once all the wires were made up, they were temporarily bunched together with cable ties before being wrapped in loom tape. This tape looks very similar to electrical insulation tape but is actually very different in that it doesn’t have an adhesive backing. Loom tape does, however, stick to itself very well, much like how cling film adheres to its own surface. The advantage of using this product is that it can be unwound cleanly at any point in the future should any problem need to be rectified.

Within the new loom I included any NMEA 2000 cables that were unlikely to need moving, along with the wiring harness for the new chartplotter and AIS transponder (see accompanying info box). Any flimsy wires were joined onto heavier-gauge wire and the join was buried within the loom for protection.

Although I used a colour scheme for the wires, once installed, my design allowed each wire to sit at its own intended terminal. But I still wanted to be able to identify each circuit, so I engaged the services of a purpose-made labelling machine. Each label, though small, was easy to read and able to stick like a flag around the wire.



Soldering the crimped terminals

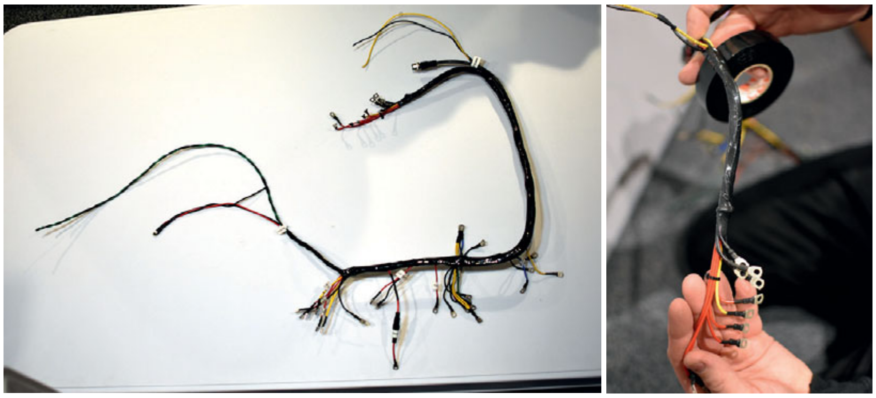


New switch panel made and custom printed

Lastly, I added two red LED lights to the lighting circuit and cable-tied them to the finished loom. These provide red-light illumination to the inside of my console at night (red light preserves your night vision).

Once finally installed, the benefits were immediately apparent. The console locker is now clutter-free, its switches and instrument lighting are sound, the air horns on my rear frame work perfectly, and even the navigation lights are now much brighter than before. All in all, I would say this has been a success and well worth the effort. Furthermore, I can’t deny that there is so much more satisfaction to be had in completing a project of this type oneself. And I confess that now, every time I flick a switch or power up my electronics, I feel as if there’s a part of me in Northwind Challenger’s wires and circuitry! ■

> WHEN IT COMES TO TERMINALS, THERE SEEMS TO BE MUCH DEBATE AS TO WHETHER SOLDERING OR CRIMPING IS THE BEST METHOD.



The completed loom no longer resembles a bird’s nest. 2. Wrapping the completed loom. Note this is special loom tape and not electrical insulation tape

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AYE AYE, SKIPPER!

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Paul Glatzel considers the vital role played by a good skipper …

When we think of a 'skipper', we tend to think of commercial boats and a salty old seadog with their flat cap and maybe even a Popeye-type pipe. What we don't tend to think of is you, your partner and family members – i.e. regular people just heading out for a great day afloat. As much as that stereotypical salty seadog is very much a skipper, so too are you, and in this article we'll look at what that means in practice and what you can, and perhaps should, do to be the best possible skipper you can be.

Whether you work on a commercial boat or have a pleasure craft, the person in charge is the skipper and that skipper has a duty of care both to all those on board and to others on the water.

So what can you do to become the best skipper you can possibly be? There is no 'perfect' skipper and everyone will have a different view as to what 'best' is, but for me, a great skipper needs the following qualities: being knowledgeable and having a passion for sharing that knowledge; being humble and realising that every day afloat is a school day and one is always learning; not feeling the need to do everything oneself and using the time afloat to develop the skills of others; and if things go wrong, taking responsibility, leading from the front, never blaming others and then learning from the experience.

So how can we achieve our aims and hit the heights as a skipper? In terms of being knowledgeable, that comes from experience and learning through courses, as well as the likes of YouTube and online articles and magazines. The key is sharing that knowledge and helping others to be better. Do you teach others how to tie and use knots? Do you get them lassoing lines onto cleats? Do you encourage them to helm the vessel? Getting everyone from children to those 'older' kids doing things gets them far more involved and spreads the knowledge. It also makes it more fun for others!

> ONE OF THE AREAS WHERE I SEE SKIPPERS FALLING SHORT MORE COMMONLY THAN ANYTHING ELSE IS COMMUNICATION.

Another great way to get others involved concerns the subject of safety. Show those that you boat with regularly how to issue a distress via the VHF, how to deploy flares, how to check whether life jackets are correctly fitted and all the other things they may need to know to be safe on board. A good way to get kids used to using the VHF is to get them to call up the marina for a berth or to arrange a refuel.

One of the areas where I see skippers falling short more commonly than anything else is communication. Ask yourself a question: When you come alongside, do your crew do what you need them to? When it doesn't go quite right, do you raise your voice? Have you ever shouted at the kids or your partner? Great if the answer is

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no, but if you have spent any time in a marina you'll know what I mean, as you will have seen and heard people not getting it quite right. Make sure that as a skipper you plan what you want to do and then you brief those around you really clearly. Get the crew to repeat back what you have agreed so you can see if they understood it. Remember at every stage that if they don't quite grasp it, you should assume that it's your explanation that's a bit off rather than them being the issue. At that point, rebrief them, confirm their understanding and go again. Equally, if the crew don't deploy the lines as you want, you should again assume it's down to your explanation rather than incompetence on their part. Back away, rebrief and go again.

Going back to the subject of responsibility, as skipper, you need to ensure that you adhere to the rules that govern the operation of your boat. This of course means the collision regulations, but it also means local by-laws (search online for them on the local harbour master's website). And while it may surprise you, under the Merchant Shipping Act you also have an overriding responsibility to ensure the safety of those on your boat and others – even if it's a pleasure craft you are on and it's just friends and family out with you. None of this should really be an issue, as if we act sensibly and do what we need to, we'll fulfil our duty to those on our boat and others.

As a skipper, you can make a huge difference on your craft and to those that boat with you. Getting the best from others and inspiring their boating future is something special to be part of. **Keep safe and have a great time afloat!** PBR

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PAUL GLATZEL

is an RYA powerboat and personal watercraft trainer and wrote the RYA Powerboat Handbook and the RYA Advanced Powerboat Handbook. He runs Powerboat Training UK and Marine Education in Poole and Lymington (www.powerboattraininguk.co.uk and www.marine-education.co.uk).

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